SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE

August 1931

VOL. XC NUMBER 2

THIS SUBTLE LAND

By STRUTHERS BURT

Writers about America are accustomed to represent it as a land of dull uniformity—vast monotony of landscape, mass production, standardized population. Struthers Burt repudiates this view, and in this article reveals a land of extraordinary and subtle variety in people and landscape—a land which is developing a consciousness of its own separate identity and an appreciation of its own authentic character. And this view is supported elsewhere in this number by a group of narratives from American life selected in SCRIBNER'S contest to which people of many sorts from every section of the country have contributed.

THE old-fashioned, provincial American idea, still prevalent among the less informed, was that size in itself was a virtue. Undoubtedly this arose to some extent from the uneasy feeling that whatever else we might lack, at least we had size. Undoubtedly also it arose to some extent from the smallness of our unbeloved mother country, England, as compared to the generous slice of a continent that belonged to us. But the instinctive feeling that largeness is good represents a certain stage in civilization, what might be called the epic stage. If you have enough land and there are numerous, and increasing, members of your tribe, then you are a fine tribe. Quantity is the *summum bonum*.

As civilization spreads throughout a nation, from the top down, and from the centre out, quantity, which the intelligent of that nation have always known to be an absurd criterion, is seen by a growing number to be an absurd criterion, but, for the most part, this growing number falls into the opposite error. Quantity, in itself, becomes a vice, scarcity in itself becomes a virtue, and the real object of the investigation, quality, is as much overlooked as ever.

A minimum of thought will enable any one to perceive why most present-day American criticism is what it is. With the exception of a few non-Aryan citizens, such as the Chinese and the Negro, hardly any of whom are critics, most of us mentally are still European, even if a number of us have been away from Europe for two hundred and fifty years. It is a pity that the Chinese and Negroes are not critics, for they have in

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their blood certain memories of size and numbers which would permit them to understand the United States better than most. Furthermore, one must bear in mind the critical mood. It is seldom a synthetic mood and is inclined to refer back constantly to well-known standards. Somerset Maugham, in speaking of this critical mood in Henry James, remarks that Henry James "turned his back on one of the great events of the world's history, the rise of the United States, in order to report tittle-tattle at tea parties in English country houses."

It is safe to assume, therefore, that the average critic is unable to understand anything so large as either the roughness or the subtlety of the United States.

The European is trained to think in small units. He cannot help himself. He is born to small units. He is used to ducking in and out of frontiers and getting from one country to another in a few hours. Therefore, just as he is inclined to mistake apparent surface sameness for simplicity, and that simplicity for subsurface dullness, so he mistakes apparent surface differences for individualism and color. He is not alone in this. The half-cultivated American agrees with him. There is nothing so romantic to the half-cultivated as some one saying "Good morning" in a language only partially understood.

The European is inclined to forget that individualism and color are found in a man's mind and not in his clothes or his language. It is the way he wears those clothes and uses that language which counts. I should like to wager that the average American cowboy wears a standardized Stetson and speaks the language common to the United States with considerably more originality than the average European peasant wears his native costume and speaks the language which belongs to him.

At all events, it must be increasingly obvious to every one that the time has arrived when, most definitely, this country needs a body of real criticism, written by men who, to begin with, appreciate the magnitude and difficulty of their job, and who, to end with, will avoid catch-phrases and actually study, long and bewildering as the task is, their subject. For example, if you say Americans do not love the soil, what are you going to do with the millions of Americans who live on the soil, and the increasing number of Americans who are going back to it the moment they have enough money to do so? If you say Americans—and it is often said—have no love of the leisure of gardens, what are you going to do with the gardens of Virginia, Charleston, New England, the Middle West, New York, Pennsylvania, all over the place, from sea to sea. If you say America is overcrowded, as Count Keyserling says, what are you going to do with the fact that, outside of a few congested centres, it is still one of the loneliest and most sparsely settled countries in the world? If you say that Americans go in for divorce, what are you going to do with the millions of happily married American couples? If you say American women are selfish, what are you going to do with myriad unselfish American women? If you say America is mechanistic, how do you account for the growing interest in all the arts, the increasing number of young Americans who are entering the arts, and the emergence, every year more apparent to the observer, of America as a great—perhaps the greatest—of the artistic nations? In short, how are you going to reconcile the Rocky Mountains and the sand barrens of Cape Hatteras?

The tom-toms and the black and white descriptions of the post-war period were probably necessary, they accomplished a great and needed task—at least, they stirred the blood and sharpened the

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eyes—but the necessity for them is over. You can attract a man's attention by exaggeration, but it is qualification that finally convinces him. This country has suddenly become self-conscious, and discriminating, far more so than its critics. It will take a wise critic from now on to impress it to any great extent.

Perhaps the first thing we must learn to do is to define the United States in their own terms. The United States are facts; you just can't argue them away or dismiss them in a few well-chosen sentences, or brush them aside by hatred or contempt. They are implacable phenomena, whatever else you may say about them. And perhaps the next thing we must learn to do, or rather, relearn, is to regard the United States, and speak of them, as they once regarded and spoke of themselves—a condition which has not changed, as the acute observer of the present-day American drama well knows.

II

One should never speak of the United States as it, she or her. That is a bad habit and a psychological, historical and geographical mistake. If you have to use a pronoun, you should always use these, or they.

Let us see; and this is only one instance out of forty-eight. On the 10th of April, 1606, James the First of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, Defender of the Faith, set somewhat vaguely, but with royal generosity, the limits of Virginia. To the London Company he granted the right to colonize the eastern seaboard of the North American continent from latitude 34° to latitude 41°, this territory to run west two hundred miles. In 1609, His Majesty, becoming even more vague and generous, granted a new charter enlarging these boundaries. Virginia was to be all the land two hundred miles north and two hundred miles south of Point Comfort, and west and northwest from sea to sea.

No king could have been more definite in his indefinite fashion, or have fixed more solemnly the limits within which for all time certain people were to be called Virginians. Back of this solemnity was the Great Seal of England. Had the inhabitants of the middle section of the North American Continent abided by James the First's decision, Virginia to-day would have been Kentucky, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Northern California, West Virginia, and the southern parts of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Nebraska. But the inhabitants of the middle section of the North American Continent did not want to abide by James the First's decision. They wanted to be something else.

Very early in her history, Virginia claimed that both Maryland and Pennsylvania had stolen part of her land, which was rather putting the cart before the horse, because what had really happened was that certain frontiersmen up in the northwest section of Virginia wanted to be Marylanders or Pennsylvanians, instead of Virginians, but these losses were more than compensated for a hundred years later, in 1776, by the formal addition of what is now the State of Kentucky to Fincastle County, Virginia. Fincastle County, already large, became larger. Kentucky has 40,598 square miles, although even at that, it ranks in this respect only thirty-sixth among the States and is, for instance, less than half the size of the State of Wyoming, which consists of 97,914 square miles. Just why any one should ever have thought that the lean, hard, bitter Long-Knives who crossed the mountains and cleared the eastern ranges and the great central limestone plateau of Kentucky of trees and Indi-

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ans, would have been content to be under the domination of the urbane planters of the Virginia littoral, or even the fairly gentle farmers of the Virginia hinterland, is a puzzle. In 1792, Kentucky, with frontier insolence, asserted it was no part or parcel of Virginia and set itself up as a separate State.

Kentucky became a State with a trace of the acrid frontier blood in it, and so it remains to-day, although later, in its central portion, it developed an aristocracy as urbane as that of Virginia itself, and as gay, if a trifle more reckless. Virginia and most of the other original thirteen States, save perhaps up at the tip of New England, never had this smoky, acrid frontier quality. In their western counties, perhaps, but not as a whole. They were settled in a period when gentlemen, or solid merchants, or religious fugitives expected to live as gentlemen, or solid merchants, or religious fugitives, wherever they were. They were settled as Englishmen settle a land, not as, later on, Americans settled America. Here, just as in nature, and for very natural yet subtle reasons, were the elements of a nation shaping themselves, with all their self-perpetuating differences within a common whole.

Kentucky separated itself from Virginia in 1792, but this was nothing compared to the truncation that occurred in 1861. In that year forty counties of the sovereign Commonwealth of Virginia, commonwealth, mind you, not a mere State, and there are only four commonwealths in this country—Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Virginia—although just exactly what that means I have never been able to discover, met in convention at Wheeling, then Virginia, now West Virginia, and declared their part of the State separate forever. For two hundred and fifty-five years that country had been Virginia, now it was no longer Virginia. These deserting sons of Virginia celebrated their desertion by sending 32,000 troops to the Northern Army. In short, it was a rebellion within a rebellion. But one famous West Virginian escaped to remain always a Virginian, and that was "Stonewall" Jackson.

Once again a divorce had happened. What the king had joined together, let no one put asunder. But it had been put asunder, and the only wonder is that the divorce had not happened before. Between the Virginians to the east of the mountains and the Virginians over the mountains, there had never been much but mutual contempt. They were different breeds, their environment was different, they were forced to meet different problems.

Like the original Kentuckians, the Virginians over the mountains were mostly Scotch-Irish, who had begun to push down from Pennsylvania around 1732 along the backbone of the Appalachian Range, followed by some placid, not-to-be-denied Pennsylvania Germans, plodding along like intent crows behind men sowing grain. The Scotch-Irish were a dour, cantankerous, individualistic, rawboned, silently imaginative people, and so they are to-day whether you find them in Pittsburgh, Wheeling, or the Pacific Sea Islands. They pushed down all along the mountains of the South; through Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia, into Alabama, touching Kentucky and Tennessee to the east; driving an alien wedge straight through a hostile country. South Carolina was barely touched because South Carolina's western frontier ends abruptly, and that is one reason, out of many, why, during the Civil War, South Carolina was so whole-heartedly Confederate.

If Virginia can be called "the mother of presidents," Pennsylvania can be called "the mother of dissension." For some odd reason, rebels are constantly being

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born in Pennsylvania, although they seldom remain there.

These mountaineers were not Southerners and never became Southerners. They were mountaineers. In their Scotch-Irish blood had been mountains for generations. Mist on a hill was more to them than all the fat valleys in the world. To-day they are Republicans, Unionists and believers in the devil; they make corn whiskey, and if they can't make it any other place, they make it in a church, which is also a Scotch-Irish trick. Furthermore, they still speak Elizabethan English. They had no slaves, their small mountain farms did not need them. Nowadays in western North Carolina you will see comparatively few Negroes. Even in central North Carolina, as soon as a hill appears, Negroes disappear. Just a few years ago—this may still be true, so far as I know—there were counties in western North Carolina which were dangerous for a Negro to enter. The Negro was the symbol of all the mountaineers hated; the symbol of their neighbors to the east. These neighbors were mostly of English descent, that is to say, they were in Virginia, with a small admixture of Huguenot and German Palatinate blood, and along the seacoast especially, and also in the rich central valleys, they were slave-owners. Even admitting a thirty per cent, or larger, discount in the glittering ante-bellum tradition that has come down to us, these people were lordly, aristocratic and leisurely.

To these same Scotch-Irish, or pure Scotch, the expansion of the American frontier was largely due. Only the Scotch-Irish and the pure Scotch were able to meet the Indian on his own terms; indeed, often they taught the Indian a trick or two. When General St. Clair of the British army raided central New York during the Revolution, the American government had to offer a special reward for "blue-eyed Indians" because the Tory Scotch stripped and painted themselves in order the more artistically and comfortably to take scalps.

During the Civil War, North Carolina, one of the most loath of the Southern States to secede, when it did secede sent more troops to the Southern army than its fire-eating neighbor South Carolina, and more troops to the Northern army than Rhode Island. And it was North Carolina which broke the backbone of the Confederacy after three years of magnificent fighting. The North Carolinians decided that it was "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight" and deserted by regiments, going up into the sympathetic mountains, where they told their former comrades to "come and get them." A great deal of all this was due to the fact that North Carolina was largely, and still is, a Scotch-Irish or pure Scotch State; Scotch-Irish in the mountains, pure Scotch in the centre and elsewhere, save for a narrow strip of big, slave-owning plantations along Albemarle Sound and further south at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. The Scotch, as always, were sturdy, individualistic crofters, that is to say, small farmers. The last battle ever fought with claymores was fought on North Carolina soil between opposing Scotchmen during the War of the Revolution. Flora MacDonald's house—the Flora of Bonnie Prince Charlie—is still standing where she lived for a number of years after Culloden, and on the golf course near the North Carolinian town of Southern Pines there is a little hill where early in the eighteenth century Scotch Presbyterians and Scotch Highlander Catholics fought a pretty, Scotch fight.

And yet we speak of the South as "the South," and the West as "the West," and the North as "the North," and the

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East as "the East," just as for many years the West Virginians spoke of themselves as Virginians.

There is nothing more odd, or more colorful, than to trace the way in which our States have become States and remained States, fiercely and persistently.

To the connoisseur of American history and the American present it is amazing the manner in which State boundary lines, often in the beginning arbitrary and even adventitious, and becoming more arbitrary as we moved westward to the newer States, have produced forty-eight separate principalities, different in their traditions, in their attitudes toward the present, in their plans for the future, in the characters of their inhabitants, and even in the way these inhabitants speak the language common to the country. What, for instance, save you be the ordinary and therefore careless traveller, could be more different than the States of North Carolina and South Carolina, than the States of Arizona and New Mexico, Wyoming and Idaho, California and Oregon? I commend the investigation to those interested. Once having been surveyed, a State begins to function like the human body, that is, from the heart out, and the heart of a State, concentrated in its capital, is composed of the varying interests of that State, acted upon by the character of the citizens of the State who, in their turn, as is the case with all men, have been conditioned by the particular blood that is in them and by the scenery in which they live.

A State settled in the beginning mostly by Scotchmen will never be like a State settled in the beginning mostly by Englishmen, or Irishmen, or Germans or Swedes. With all the quick communication and highways in the world, and any number of overlapping mutual interests, Minnesota will never be like Wisconsin, Maine will never be like Rhode Island, Delaware like Maryland, Iowa like Nebraska, Kansas like Missouri. Kansas was deliberately settled for political reasons with fanatics from New England and the South. Well, look at Kansas. A mountain State cannot be like a plains State. Men are greatly made by the horizon which confronts them daily.

The citizens of a great city, which spreads out into suburbs and adjacent small towns like a destroying fungus, are likely to lose sight of this individualism of the States. To them the country is likely to seem rather drearily the same as their city. Also, even if they travel, and most of them don't, they keep to trunk highways, and so the country remains to them drearily the same as their city. The error is in their mental eyesight, not the country. The country is not like their city.

Upper New Jersey is like New York City, and so is western Connecticut; that is because New York, like all great cities, spreads out like a fungus, but most of Connecticut and most of New Jersey aren't in the least like New York City. Southern New Jersey is one of the loneliest sections of the United States. And even New York State is not in the least like New York City, although both Mayor Walker and an Adirondack guide are New Yorkers. And even if western Connecticut and upper New Jersey are like New York City, isn't New York City itself a fairly individualistic place with strong characteristics? Tell some New Yorker it isn't, and see what happens.

One does not, perhaps, go as far as an enthusiastic friend of mine who claims that the States are so different that even at night in a motor-car you can instantly tell a State line by the smells—trees and other things—on one side of it and the smells on the other. I think my friend's nostrils are helped decidedly by the dif-

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ferences in paving that exist between the various States, but the more one sees of this country, the more one is impressed by the fundamental and not-to-be-changed localized variety of its people. Neither highways nor motor-cars nor any amount of surface standardization will ever change this variety. The reports of surface standardization have been greatly exaggerated, anyhow, and its peak has now been passed. Different towns and States are beginning to realize the value and pleasure of being themselves. Even in government the concentration of power in federal hands, which began under Roosevelt, is waning before the growing alarm and restlessness of the States and their people. There is every sign that before long we will be again somewhere near to what nature and the founders of this country intended us to be. This concentration of government in federal hands was for a while a good thing, it made us nationally self-conscious and a great nation; it broke down sectionalism and ignorance; in short, it created that nation known as America, building up a new common interest; but it did not make the United States "it," "she" or "her." They have remained "they," and now they want to be they once more, this time for good. Our official title, if you remember, is The United States of America. If you wish to generalize, say, America; if you wish to be discriminating, and therefore more closely approach the truth, say the United States.

Not very long ago the literature of the United States was in the hands of the folk-lorists; people who claimed a section of the country as their own and wrote books about it. We had the New England School, the Southern School, the Far-Southern School, the Middle-Western School, the Far-Western School, the California School, the Tennessee Mountain School, and so on, even the Indianapolis and New Orleans Schools. This literature flourished and was perhaps the first authentically American writing that had ever been done. It had its faults, but it also had its virtues, and it was no more egregiously wrong than what might be called the low-tide malarial school which followed, or the hearty-guffawing-at-the-moron school, from which we are now just recovering.

There has never been to my knowledge a cowboy, and I've known lots of them, quite like The Virginian, so pure, so lovely, and so noble, to paraphrase the old German song; but nonetheless the book, "The Virginian," captured a dusty, sun-shot Far-Western humor, the incredible exhilaration and glamour of distant snow peaks, that is the Far-West and will always be. I don't suppose there was ever a Southerner just like Colonel Carter of Cartersville, but Colonel Carter gave us a hint of magnolia-scented creek bottoms at night in the spring and of old houses covered with yellow jasmine, that was America and still is America.

One has only to regard the extraordinary political differences which spring up between the States every four years to have some sense of their different textures. Why is Pennsylvania so corrupt and contented; why is New York, despite its corruption, a fairly gallant and imaginative State? Why is Montana wet and its western neighbor, Idaho, dry? Why is Wisconsin advanced and Illinois reactionary? Why is Maryland honest and governed largely by fine men with traditions; Virginia, too; while Indiana, until recently, was governed by the Ku-Klux-Klan? Why did Alabama permit Senator Heflin for so long, and South Carolina, Cole Blease? Cole Blease and Heflin sat in the same chamber as Bingham and Walcott of Connecticut, and Bruce and Tydings of Maryland, and

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Kendrick of Wyoming, and Gerry of Rhode Island, and Wadsworth of New York, and Norris of Nebraska, to mention only a few of the upright and courageous men who represent us, or have represented us.

Turning to the most taciturn of our States, not for nothing are Vermont's principal industries the quarrying of granite and marble. A Vermont delegate to the last Republican National Convention told me that the only people who knew exactly what our ex-President meant when he said he "didn't choose to run," were the members of his own tiny delegation. They had known from the beginning. That was Vermont's way of saying no. Even the other New Englanders were confused. Vermont possesses the devastating silences and the dislike of direct statement of its famous son. There is the Vermont story of the tourist who stopped his car to ask a resident the name of the next town only to be met with the reply, "What business is that of ours?" and the equally famous Maine story of the Downeaster who was fishing by an open drawbridge when he saw the local blind man approaching. "By gum!" he said to himself, "if somebody doesn't tell that fellow the bridge is open, he'll fall in." A little while later he said again, to himself, "By gum! if somebody doesn't tell that fellow the bridge is open, he'll fall in." There was a longer pause, and then he nodded and said—for the third time to himself, "By gum! He has fallen in."

These things are not fairy stories, they are the folk-lore of a country, and folk-lore is like the humus that builds itself up in a forest. There is always the surface of new and drifting leaves, and grass, and twigs, but underneath is the accumulation of years turned into the soil itself, and some of the new and drifting leaves will become part of that soil as well. Countries underneath do not change greatly. The Vermonter is still taciturn, while, in New Mexico, wailing and beating themselves at Easter-time, are flagellants, the only ones in the world. It is not wise to think because so many people wear President suspenders that they are all Republicans. There are just as many magnolias as ever in the South, new cowboys are being born every day in the Far-West, and Vermont still quarries granite.

The United States are, in truth, a great bundle of different-colored skeins, held together, but loosely and absent-mindedly, by a city called Washington. A city that is less like America than any city on the continent. New York is far more typical of certain American aspects. And yet Washington, in a strange way, is America epitomized; a certain leisureliness in haste; a certain determination to bring order out of the initial inevitable disorder of a great sprawling land, most of which has only recently been settled; a certain desire to combine those apparently incompatible desires—cohesiveness and a fierce individualism. We elect our senators to make laws for the whole land, but punish them if for a moment they forget the States from which they come. To end with, Washington is the slowly evolving national dream of beauty, a dream which many think we do not possess, but which we know is, in reality, the impelling motive of our lives, much as we may scoff at it in public or even pretend to ourselves it is no part of us.

In their new-found sophistication, the actual meaning of which word most of them apparently do not yet know, our intellectuals and their admirers, discovering . . . bless their simple souls . . . that size in itself is not a virtue, have done harm to and misinterpreted perhaps the most essential tradition of American life. One cannot altogether

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blame them, for this tradition, during the periods when mere size was considered a virtue, inflated itself with a perfection that was almost as foolish as the present lack of belief. And yet, without this tradition the American is not his essential self, and certainly without taking this tradition into consideration you cannot even begin to understand the American.

III

Probably nothing in the American national consciousness has been of more importance than our sense of the frontier, nor has there been any other strain of tradition that has so shaped our character both for good and for ill. To our sense of the frontier is due both our initiative and our lawlessness, our kindliness and our sudden outbursts of cruelty. At the back of the mind of practically every American of any long standing, whether the thought ever reach consciousness or not, is this sense of the frontier; as history—that is to say, as a fact, as an epic, as a saga; and the sense of the frontier as a present refuge. For such is the size of this country, and such our present mood, that the frontier, which we all thought was vanishing, will probably here and there throughout the continent be preserved forever. We are now taking steps not to lose our frontier. As a matter of fact, conditions are such that the frontier, spotted but in large areas, would have remained anyhow. Nature has taught us a good deal and the day of exploitation is almost over.

To the American the conquest of his frontier is what the epics of the heroes were to the Greeks, the tales of the founders to the Romans, Charlemagne and Roland and Bayard to the French, Alfred and the Black Prince and Elizabeth to the English. These things represent an epitome of the national character, and this epitome is a comfort in times of stress and a balance wheel of pride in moments of discouragement. And it is well that the image be not too seriously impaired. When a nation finds all its history absurd and belittling, then the nation itself has become little. Particularly—and this is more important than anything else—it was through the frontier that the American achieved his predominant characteristic, the imperturbable belief that everything is possible. It is the figure of the frontiersman that preserves this belief in his mind, even if he has never in all his life, to his knowledge, given a thought to the frontiersman.

Possibly (as the European claims, although Europe has a strange way of contradicting itself, as in the case of Fascism and Communism, and the new-party ideas of the English idealists), this belief is a childish one and will disappear with greater maturity, but if it does, then the world will have lost another ultimate hope. The belief that man can eventually really conquer his environment, politically, socially and materially, is the one actual benefit Columbus conferred upon humanity by discovering the western continents. When it goes, if it does, and one must hope bitterly that it will not, then all Columbus will have done will have been to have discovered another Europe. What distinguishes the American from the European, and, until recently, before the personnel of our immigration began to fall off, the European who came to America from the European who stayed at home, is this belief that man is largely master of his fate.

Certainly one of the most important social problems to-day in the United States, if not the most important social problem, is whether the old American idea of the frontier will be able to con-

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quer and absorb the mass of undigested immigration in our larger cities; people with utterly alien loyalties, treasons, virtues and vices. No two figures are more dissimilar than those of the ancient bad-man of the frontier and the present-day gunman of the cities. And certainly the closing of the era of free land has had a most marked effect on American life.

To those who, like myself, have seen the frontier, and there are thousands of Americans who have done so, although few of them seem to live in New York, the attitude of the critics and historians is amusing. Whatever else may be said of it, the frontier was, and still is, where it exists, filled with gusto and glamour; and a sense of gusto and glamour, even if it is only of the past, would not harm present-day America. Life without some gusto and glamour is a dull affair. Untrue as are the more romantic pictures of the West, they are no more untrue than are the dreary chained-to-the-soil books with which, recently, we have been deluged. Perhaps they are less untrue, for they give us at least some sense of youth, strength and high-heartedness. The frontier was a land of quick laughter and quick delight, and this, despite all the horror, the sordidness, the long stretches of blinding toil, the failures and the unmarked graves. If to-day a man wishes for deep rib-racking laughter, based on the cosmic humor of things; also if he wishes for deep, almost perilous delight, of dawns, dusks, mountains, rivers and things in general, the only places I know where he can get these are in certain remote sections of our Far-West. It is obvious that, for the most part, the men and women who followed the frontier were adventurous, and they found themselves in an environment unalterably adventurous and dramatic. It is still dramatic and adventurous—the air, the scenery, the physical features. It is amazing how few Americans realize these facts. Even the birds of prey who followed in the wake of the trapper, the teamster, the railwayman and the cattleman, were adventurous. The frontier harlot was an adventurous harlot, and the frontier gambler an adventurous gambler. Both had that little spark of glamour and gusto that prevented them from dying in the gutter near to lamp-posts and sewers.

We should regard our pioneers as the English regard their Drakes, their Hawkinses and their Raleighs. Our period of frontier expansion was our Elizabethan period; it was drunken, lecherous, gusty, high-hearted, mirthful and, when it had to be, quiet, deadly and far-seeing. In the beginning even Kansas was drunken and lecherous. Drink and lusty women have been part of every frontier. It is only when mortgages come in that the missionaries get much hold.

Here is an epic rôle of figures that cannot be denied, and many of these figures still persist, and from time to time, as in the case of the forester and the national-park ranger, they are added to: trapper, immigrant, soldier, prospector, cattleman, sheepman, homesteader, forester, ranger. Of these only the original type of trapper, the immigrant, the soldier, and—to a great extent—the homesteader, have disappeared. Trappers, however, there are still aplenty and prospectors, too, and the latter will now again come to the fore as wages fall and the dollar rises. There are few Western rivers in which a man cannot pan at least a dollar and a half a day. Imagine, too, this vast territory as it was and as great sections of it are to-day. Imagine James Bridger or Christopher Carson standing on the summit of the Continental Divide, and all around them for hundreds of miles great forested mountain ranges coming toward them like immense, crashing breakers. And yet, for all this sense of sound, an utter silence under

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the high blue sky. Not a whisper except perhaps a small wind in the firs.

Or imagine endless deserts, or plains with the blue mountains in the distance.

Physically it is impossible for millions of Americans ever to see these things—for the majority of Americans, perhaps; but how any American can pretend to assay his country without at least imaginatively taking them into account, without imaginatively brooding upon them, is beyond me. To me they symbolize the sense of the frontier which is at the centre of the American character—that nostalgia for loneliness, which afflicts most of us, even the most crowded and socially inclined; that strange lift and passionate reception of loneliness with which most of us greet loneliness when we have the chance to see it; that feeling that beyond the horizon there is always something better. This sense of the frontier is in our blood. We are the children of those who felt it. How can we avoid it?

The motion pictures have taken to depicting James Bridger and his confrères as drunk, disorderly and stained with tobacco juice. Well, at least, they are allowed to retain gusto and glamour of a certain kind. James Bridger was a rough and ready sort of fellow, although, on the other hand, Kit Carson was quiet and deeply religious. Perhaps that's why we see so little of him in the motion pictures. But here is a story of Jim Bridger which is touching and throws further light on the frontier. At the age of forty, Bridger, being unable to read or write, heard that a man named Shakespeare had written great poetry. For many weeks he camped beside the Oregon Trail and questioned the emigrants. They assured him that the rumor was correct. Finally, he found one family which had a set of Shakespeare and were willing to sell it. Bridger purchased the set and then hired a boy at forty dollars a month—an immense wage in those days—to read right through from the beginning to the end. There's a picture for you—a camp-fire and a boy reading Shakespeare to Jim Bridger. And it's an essentially American picture; the desire to read Shakespeare, the desire to sit by a camp-fire.

I remember my surprise while reading "The Ordeal of Mark Twain" by that extraordinarily fine critic, Van Wyck Brooks, to discover his hatred and fear of the frontier. And then I realized that here was a case of pathetic fallacy and that the critic was reading into the mind of the frontiersman what he himself would have felt. But the real frontiersman is a separate breed, and the glamour and gusto that he found, or finds, is not the gusto and glamour that would appeal, let us say, to a Whistler. Aldous Huxley, for example, would have hated Drake. Yet, nonetheless, had Whistler had more of the unconscious American sense of the frontier in him he would have been a greater painter, and certainly Aldous Huxley is no Shakespeare. Transmuted, this sense of the frontier, this delight in and curiosity about life, this almost childish preoccupation with life's horizons, is what makes great art. It made the Golden Period of the Greeks, the Renaissance and Elizabethan England.

IV

Equally silly, except for the amateur of history or as a mere exercise in virtuosity, and closely connected with the present deprecation of the frontier, is the present eagerness to black-wash the great. This, however, is not an American trick; it is taking place all over the world.

Undoubtedly hero-worship, of a nation, of a period, of a man, undiluted is an evil. The stature of perfection encourages despair. What makes us love Saint

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Francis of Assisi is that to begin with he was so little of a saint. But that is different from attempting to give us the essential Saint Francis only in the terms of his riotous youth. It may be that I would prefer that George Washington in his old age had not liked to pinch young ladies in the church at Alexandria and it may be that I might prefer that Lincoln had not been something of a neurotic—as we all are—although to prefer these things would indicate that I was something of an absurd perfectionist. But what have these side lights of character to do with the quintessence of the men in question; the quintessence which is part of a national tradition and which makes that tradition fine or meagre? This quintessence is about all that the ordinary citizen has time to gather. And if the ordinary citizen is not a fool, he is aware that all people, no matter how great, are still human beings. Washington was certainly not pinching young women at Valley Forge, and Lincoln was not neurotic in his conduct of the Civil War. Nor was Hamilton any the less a great financier because he indulged in a scandalous affair with a married lady in Philadelphia.

Washington stands—or should stand—in the American consciousness for steadfastness; Hamilton for financial wisdom and a lucid patriotism; Lincoln for compassion. Even our most sophisticated would not be harmed by the admixture of some steadfastness, financial wisdom, lucid patriotism and compassion.

There is a letter in the possession of a Southern lady written her by a friend whose brother, a Confederate guerrilla, but only eighteen years old, had been captured and condemned to death. Lincoln granted her an interview, and in the letter is this sentence: "And when I saw him all fear went out of me." I think that is a thrilling sentence, considering that fear is the major evil of life. A man who can exorcise mortal fear by his mere presence, if only once, is among the great. Lincoln did it many times.

At all events, in that vast and subtle, and most difficult and complicated task, the proper evaluation of the United States and the building up of a rational school of criticism concerning them, which now confronts the American critic, and the American historian, and the ordinary intelligent citizen, one thing is certain, the American, a chastened and wiser and, at last, a fairly cosmopolitan creature, must once again regard himself as the most western of the Occidentals. Something apart spiritually, if not apart otherwise. He cannot remain a homunculus of Europe as he is to-day. He must turn his back on the Atlantic and—for good or ill—face the sunset. And, indeed, that is the essence of real cosmopolitanism and culture—a knowledge of all things and a bitter, critical, yet constructive pride in your own. Whether the American is aware of this task or not, and no matter how much he may wish to evade it, it is just around the corner.

But even when the American is well into this first great task of understanding his country, he will have another great task before him. Nor is this putting the cart before the horse. America is so large that it is necessary to understand it before you can love it—at least, love it intelligently.

It is more difficult to love a great land than a small one, and yet a man or a woman who has no love of land is but a half-creature. I do not mean patriotism as generally understood. For that I have the necessary contempt. I mean a quiet, abiding, clear-sighted passion for your own, through good or evil, with a full knowledge of faults or virtues, such as a wise, mature man has for a woman. At

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the beginning of such a passion is the ability to regard America—the country—as a separate entity apart from whatever certain fools, or rascals, may, at the time, be doing to her. It is this feeling which reduces the supply and the power of fools. And when you have this feeling you would no more think of dishonoring or desecrating your country than you would think of throwing mud on the skirt of your wife. Part of this feeling consists in getting back to the naked body of the country, is compounded of a love of American sights, sounds, smells, and horizons, even if the last are nowadays too often littered with ugliness. But it is also through this feeling that this transitory ugliness will one day pass.

However, large as America is, it is possible to bring to her the same passion that we see bestowed upon smaller lands. America is one of the best "nuggeted" countries, to use a gold mining expression, in existence. Even if your mind is as yet not trained to abide any but small units, so varied is the pattern of the United States, both socially and geographically, that somewhere you can find whatever you want that will please you, or content you, or delight you. And even if you are so situated that you cannot go to these places, you can at least admit that they exist. The Englishman chained to Birmingham doesn't deny Devonshire. But, if you are an American, you will be wiser if you try at once to understand as well the large stretches, social, geographical, and political, that lie between the American nuggets. To a modern mind trained in distance and masses, trained by the motor-car, by sound waves, and airplanes, many of these have their own rare beauty, while even with the most barren and ugly there is always an immense excitement to be discovered both in their present and in what may happen to them.

Love, as we all know, is provincial, while understanding and sympathy are universal. If the American will try to understand America, he will then be in a position to love clear-sightedly some part of that entirely different web of color, the United States.

"Life in the United States"—the narratives selected for publication from which the prize winners will be chosen in SCRIBNER'S *$1,500 contest—begins on page 133. This month the selections tell the story of a Kansas childhood; a Tennessee youngster who joined the Marines, went to naval prison and while there educated himself; an Oklahoma race riot; and a North Carolina hotel, which if it were somewhere in Europe would appear in the guide books, written by a travelling salesman. Next month —"He-Rain" (New Mexico), by Holger Cahill and "Red Cross and County Agent" (Kentucky), by Edmund Wilson. Others to come: "Diving for Abalones" (California), "Fragments from Alluvia" (Louisiana), "The Saga of Joe Magarac: Steelman" (Pennsylvania).*

"Three Ghosts of America," by André Maurois—the United States as seen through the eyes of the distinguished French writer—will be a leading feature in the September SCRIBNER'S. *Articles to come: "The Civilization of American Cities," by R. L. Duffus, "Standardized America vs. Romantic South Seas," by Margaret Mead.*

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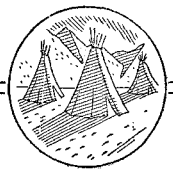

By Harriet Plimpton

Unseen

Six times split with the axe of childbirth
To satisfy a man
Who knew but one light only, the full moon of desire,
Now she was a gibe for boys,
Waddling like a sow.
To her sons she was all things—
Food, warmth, desire to learn,
And the power and will to attain.
She taught them work was more than any tide
And how to be was to become.
She never failed when they had need,
Knowing the powers of each one to endure
And seeing that they stood that much alone,
Except for her expectancy of what they could become.
They did not disappoint her, nor themselves,
But taught and preached and cured
Till men called their name great.
Waddling here and there about her house,
She walked triumphant where they were.

Hardness

I HAVE seen them, men and women,
Standing the things they had to—
Cold, heat, the failure of sun and rain,
And the walls about those they loved,
I have seen them standing the things they had to,
And growing harder, like iron drawn from the forge.
I have seen how men turn from them
To those who are soft as April after the winds go down.
But I say to you who pass by them, seeking a fleece for yourselves,
Theirs is the way of trumpets ringing across the hills,
Theirs is the way of stars on glittering winter nights,
Theirs is the way of men who have lasted down to to-day.

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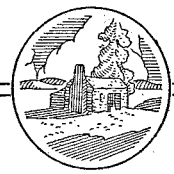

LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

FIRST SELECTIONS IN SCRIBNER'S PRIZE CONTEST FOR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OR OBSERVATION AT FIRST HAND CONCERNED WITH AN ASPECT OF AMERICAN LIFE

To encourage the spirit of seeking what is true and valid in our own culture and in our own land, we conducted the contest. More than 3,000 manuscripts were submitted. All have not yet been read, but already the editors know that much unusual material is being unearthed. We are selecting the most interesting ones and shall publish as many as we can, beginning with the group which follows. As the series progresses, we hope that these records, many of them done by people who are not professional writers, will convey to our readers a sense of the variety and the uniqueness of life in the United States.

Corn Village

By MERIDEL LESUEUR

"From our low hills no Gods have taken flight."

Like many Americans, I will never recover from my sparse childhood in Kansas. The blackness, weight and terror of childhood in mid-America strike deep into the stem of life. Like desert flowers we learned to crouch near the earth, fearful that we would die before the rains, cunning, waiting the season of good growth. Those who survived without psychic mutilation have a life cunning, to keep the stem tight and spare, withholding the deep blossom, letting it sour rather than bloom and be blighted.

Looking for nourishment, we saw the dreary villages, the frail wooden houses, the prairies ravished, everything impermanent as if it were not meant to last the span of one man's life, a husk through which human life poured, leaving nothing behind, not even memory, and every man going a lonely way in a kind of void, all shouting to each other and unheard, all frightfully alone and solitary.

And fear, fear everywhere on the streets in the gray winter of the land, and the curious death in the air, the bright surface activity of the pioneer town and the curious air dissipating powers of fear and hate.

The Middle West is all so familiar to me and yet it is always unfamiliar, a dream, an unreality. There are Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska. They were for a long time frontier States. There villages are yet the waste and ashes of pioneering, and the people too waste and ash, with the inner fire left out. There is still the pioneer tension as if

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something was still to be done, something conquered, something overcome, and there is no longer anything to conquer and no longer an enemy. I have walked around the streets of many small towns in Kansas. I have travelled over the country looking and looking. I lived my impressionable years in a Kansas corn village. In my youth as now I was looking for sustenance. I was looking for something to live on. I was trying to grow, to come alive.

In the mid-centre of America a man can go blank for a long, long time. There is no community to give him life; so he can go lost as if he were in a jungle. No one will pay any attention. He can simply be as lost as if he had gone into the heart of an empty continent. A sensitive child can be lost too amidst all the emptiness and ghostliness.

I am filled with terror when I think of the emptiness and ghostliness of mid-America. The rigors of conquest have made us spiritually insulated against human values. No fund of instinct and experience has been accumulated, and each generation seems to be more impoverished than the last.

Look at the face of the Middle Westerner and you know he has been nourished in a poor soil without one day of good growing weather.

Yet there is the land abundant, in seasons. I have looked and looked at the land. The symbols of this country are winter, the departure of the year, the "death of all sweet things." It is the symbol of man's foreboding and his birth and his death. Life is not embodied. It is either just dying or being born. Who can tell? All our Americans have had this anxiety of life at the low ebb. I had it in my youth and still have it, a sickening anxiety like a disease, and all in that small town where I lived had it. It was limned on their faces like the ravages of some plague, some mysterious unmentioned disease of which we were all suffering. The sun leaving the earth and a terrible insecurity at the bottom of every man's soul, fears, dangers, hardships known and unknown as if one were never going to live to maturity, the days so tenuous in substance, a sheer fabric of horror and the town falling to pieces with its rotten wooden houses, and the gray shredded faces, and the place a horror, out of the world, doomed. I could not bear to get up in the morning after the winter solstice, as if some malignant power were in the air, the dim, dim faces, the blank interior of the continent, the winter madness coming on, the winter death, the sun leaving the great dark continent, the black, cold prairies, the shocks of corn desolate in the fields, the earth upturned in the cold sunlight, the smell of loam, the dark fields jagged and turned to the cold, the cattle wading through the black frozen mud and the wild embodied wind of the prairies like a presence among the fields.

The terrifying beauty too of the plains, the black stiff trees shadowless, the soft shadowless ice-world curving beneath the shadowless sky. Boys tracking down the valley, gophers hanging from their belts, gopher tails from their stocking caps. Men swathed in woollens watching the east-bound train. A hunter coming into the village, a rabbit hanging from his arm, the blood dropping from its eyes. The farm houses silent in the gulleys, in the low curve of plain. The horses in the frozen corn. The smoke of the little brush trees in a mist of frost. The white earth sloping and still, the leaden sky, all things closed, no vista, no shaking out, no revelation. Where has life gone that there is no fire and no shadow?

I was born on these prairies while the land was lying low in this mid-winter solstice, lying low like this and dream-

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ing. It curves now in low, long swells lying stark in the blue frost, so strong, so spare. Men come out of the wooden houses. I see their naked red arms, their hulking shoulders, their stubborn stocky heads. They run from the house to the barn, ducking their heads against the wind. These meaty men live in this delicate world, their bloody lives, and are looked upon by the rabbit, the prairie dog, and once the deer.

What does an American think about the land, what dreams come from the sight of it, what painful dreaming? Are they only money dreams, power dreams? Is that why the land lies desolate like a loved woman who has been forgotten? Has she been misused through dreams of power and conquest?

Anyhow the awful imprecations of the land lie heavily on the guilty white spirit. Remember the sadness and innate depression of Lincoln as symbolic. He was naturally a lover, but he never loved the land, though he walked miles over it, slept and lived on it and buried the bodies of those he loved in it; and yet he was never struck with that poetry and passion that makes a man secure upon his land, there was always instead this convulsion of anxiety, this fear.

One night, in late fall, driving back from the country our car stalled. The low dusk had come down over the prairies deepening and deepening around us like water and it was rather frightening too, because the distances became illusive and that strange emptiness and fear that no one admits were in the air. We were stalled in the road in front of the Simonsons' and, sensing our nearness, the Mrs. stood in the door and he came swinging his long frame through the dusk down the lane to us. Their house was a wooden one, shambling, behind a windbreak of trees, and the barns were better than the house and the stock better than the people.

"Hello," he called, and his voice sounded far away as if it echoed and was lost in the hollowness of the prairies.

"And John," his wife called, and we could not see her, "you'd better not go out without your coat." In that voice of the Yankee woman nagging her men.

Simonson came up to us and we saw his face and his tall Yankee body, the angular disjointed body Lincoln had.

"What's the matter? Stalled?" he said grinning, but he encompassed us with no warmth. He was simply curious and looked at us from a distance. I looked at his emaciated body with its hint of sickness like a stubborn, sturdy, thwarted tree, yet with a certain tenderness in it too. I remembered Lincoln's body, looking at Simonson; and again the old mystery presented itself in the underworld dusk of the phantom prairie world, the mystery of the slim tenuous Yankee body, hard and gawky like a boy's, never getting any man suavity in it, but hard and bitter and stubborn, always lanky and ill-nourished, surviving bitterly.

"Well," he said, suddenly gentle and impersonal, "that's too bad." And there was really a sad gentleness about him, so that I couldn't help liking him despite the acrid, bitter odor of the body, the slight warped sparseness of it that repelled, and yet the gawky tenderness. Lincoln too had this—the loose frame, the slight droop, the acrid, bitter power and tenuosity, the sense of hanging on in bad seasons, of despondency from lack of nourishment, that well-known Yankee form and the mystery of it, the strong, deep, lanky chest, so powerful but so withdrawn and gnarled, and the sudden tenacious sentimental sympathies, that would start wars for quixotic idealisms, provoke assassins' bullets and leave a wife embittered and maddened a little, left out always, never wholly warmed at that breast, the flesh never really warm and hanging from

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the tree of life, always a little acrid and ghostly, and the tenderness not enough to warm. And the anxiety always cooling the blood, making it spectral, the Yankee anxiety about something that leaves its mark on the face, on the skeleton, in the blood.

"Well," he said, scratching his ear and looking at us from his long, sorrowful face, "you better come in, hadn't you? You can come in if you want to. . . ." The far, desolate slopes of the prairies were now invisible and the chill came down around us on the black land. Simonson began to talk to us as we walked over the black land and the horizon swung in its wide circle around us, and he went on talking in that sepulchral voice, as if he were the only man in the world, a far, lone man at an outpost, just waiting to move on, to move back, to move. There was his familiarity, his heartiness and the insensitive body, and his will set on not caring, not thinking, not attending to life at all but just to tramp blankly on from minute to minute in a vacuum.

We went toward the tumbling buildings so temporary and lost. There were no stars now the darkness had come, no North Star, no guide, and Simonson talking in a void, the last man on the frontier, a far, lone man at an outpost, waiting to move on, to move back, to move. . . .

We rarely went out of the town alone. In groups we sometimes went to some known place for picnics, usually where a stream made the prairies more gracious. But usually we went walking only a little way out of the town, as if we were besieged, surrounded by some mysterious forces. I remember feeling frightened at first stepping out of the close town onto the prairie, so wide with the wide sky opening away. . . . But I did not go out often alone.

There was an Irish family I knew who lived out a few miles from town. They were lazy and enjoyed themselves, and were considered somehow immoral by the townspeople. All the foreigners in the town were isolated by their gaiety, the festivals, easy love and birth. They were always attractive to me. The foreign girl prostitutes, the great Polish woman who kept a "house," where the college boys went and whose name we were forbidden to speak. I liked her body, so rich and loose, and her broad-hipped lazy walk. The acrid Yankee body is a hard thing to live with, always ungiven, held taut for some unknown fray with the devil or the world or the flesh. These illicit women, so menacing, were the only ones at that time who could wear bright colors.

This Irish family, Irish and goaty, came to town on Saturday, and I liked to ride out with them. They had large earthy, loose faces. We rode in a wagon through the hard, tight Kansas cold, the ruts frozen so hard our teeth rattled—no snow, just the frozen bald earth and the black scrub trees. The house was a tight little white house sitting right on the top slope of the prairie. It was dirty and derelict. The inside would be cold and we would be cold, our hands and legs chapped and raw. Out of every window we could see the desolate cold prairie and the wind over it, the frozen stiff corn in the fields. At last there would be a fire in the stove, the lamps would be lighted. There was no evidence of any one living in the house, there were chairs, beds, adequate things, but it was like a camp, no idols, no tokens of an intimate life. And then Mrs. Kelly would fry the thick fat pork and cook the potatoes in their jackets, and then we would eat in the lamplight, grinning at each other in that wild, wild way they had, and making jokes, prodding each other slyly and eating the rich pork and gravy, too rich and porky, no wine, no grace,

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just the greasy, porky meal with the raucous plain loping outside to the dismal horizon and this sly human grinning at each other, the sly grin of the Irish goaty faces, bewildered too but chewing a good cud of life somehow that they had brought with them over a black sea.

I am baffled to know the meaning of people in the mid-West towns. Lewis has not been right. He has portrayed their grimaces, a seeming reality, but still only their faces in a mirror. Anderson of course has apprehended them with love, but that too has left out a great deal.

I was hungering then, a-hunger and a-thirst. So were others. The whole communal organism suffered perhaps. One individual is only an articulated sensitive point for the great herd suffering. I went about the streets looking and looking, and what I saw seemed to be without pith or meaning, dark and spectral. And every one peering through the strange air of a new continent perhaps saw the same thing, the outward busy, strenuous life and the pithless core, the black abyss. . . . Perhaps it is inevitable that in a new country communication must be muffled and silent, that there is just a babbling on the surface, a genial, meaningless babbling, and that the real reciprocation must be in silence. Frontiersmen have put themselves aside. . . .

So the only time the reality is revealed, the terrible surface torn aside, is after some violence. Violence somehow stirs up the deadly becalmed surface, breaks open the body. There was always excitement in cyclones,—the darkness, the wind from another world, the delicious terror as if at last something would be expounded,—even death, a real death,—and then the great genii appearing on the becalmed horizon, approaching the marooned town, so that everything started to a kind of horrific reality, impressing its life through the ghostly maze,—a hand lifted in terror, widened eyes, people running, screaming, embracing each other, waking from a dream, as if from a long, terrible journey, and the excitement afterward, the eye still widened, the hand uplifted, the heart accelerated, the streets swarming, trees felled, houses upended, graves revealed, bones upturned, bones of Indians, the bones of French, Spanish, those who had been dead long in the land. The talk for days,—"It took all the buttons off Sam Marvis' coat. Can you beat that? Yes, sir, he laid down in the field and the goldarned thing ripped the buttons off his coat. . . ." A visitation from a pagan world it was. But gradually the excitement would wear away, the strong cotton insulation of emotion would muffle it.

You look and look and you cannot see life anywhere apparent, only in bitterness, and spareness sold out for that neat, hygienic and sterile success that we all must have. There are whispers that so and so is doing this or that, but violence must erupt the awful lethargy, the fading away of the soul.

Once on Saturday when the town was crowded with farmers, and their wives were marketing in the thick black mud, a man shot a woman on Main Street. The woman was a young woman with gold hair, legendary as she lay dead, and she was standing looking into Stevens' Millinery Shop at a hat she probably coveted very much. And suddenly this man, her lover, jealous over a small thing, ran down the street brandishing a gun. Every one on the street stopped, a man fixing the bridle of his horse, a woman with an orange in her hand; and the distraught man stopped, took aim, and shot his sweetheart straight through the heart. She crumpled up, still looking at the hat, without a sound, and then while the man still stood with the bridle and

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the woman with the orange uplifted, he turned the gun upon himself and shot himself straight through the temple and fell in the street. For a moment no one moved. Every one stood as if bewitched. Something had happened. There it stood on Main Street, an ancient Thing. Then there was an eddying and rapid movement like dammed water let loose and the torrent broke in every breast—the townspeople broke in around the two and looked upon them in their own blood. The whole town was submerged by this torrent then. It broke in every breast and bound us all together. We turned like somnambulists looking at each other at last, not as ghosts distant and distraught, but now bound together alive, knowing ourselves alive.

There was something about it like a purging. A woman comes across the road to borrow some baking powder, and there is tenderness in her as she clicks her tongue, "The poor young things, . . ." and something in the female blood wakens to think of love being like that.

And the men gather at the street corners and talk, and the close, dark knot of human form is woven close together —they no longer straggle, stand unwoven, apart, they stand close together, welded together in the lines of their bodies, their heads leaning close, for one of their kind has felt something and let it ripen and come to expression.

The town is woven in this lovely dream. The children, round-eyed, whisper together. The women gather. The men gather. Men and women draw closer to each other in the night. Love awakens in the town. Every one is drawn into the great warp of myth.

The whole village files into the church passing the two coffins where the two lovers lie together now. Something has been said now for the whole town. It's an expurgation, a catharsis. Women embrace each other and weep for their own sorrows. Men are hearty and gentle, meeting each other on the street, and for a moment look through the mist, apprehending each other.

The day of the joint funeral is a holiday. The air is rich with meaning, the streets look no longer harried and idiotic. They have meaning now, the black houses have meaning, the church, the steeple, the railroad station. These are now places where the human scene is enacted, where there might be great feelings, shedding of the blood even. The sun pours down and it is good to be a man and a woman. Something has happened. May it never be forgotten!

But it is forgotten. The lethargy looms again, everything closes up, the streets are as they were before, and men become again only traders, movers, buyers, sellers, farmers.

Another violence—the revival. The evangelist would be a strange man, often handsome. The young girls would stand in a bright group, twittering as he came into town, shying off yet eyeing him and he them. The boys would watch him going down Main Street. The matrons asked him to their tables. There were dreams of him in the night. Even my grandmother got excited. The opening night of the revival there was always something special on our table, the dinner was a little better, there was the hint of rite and symbol.

I never saw her so excited as upon these nights of revival, so happy, so contented. She was like an actress on her opening night. She put on her best dress. She was affectionate even, and my grandmother never kissed us. She was embarrassed by any excess of feeling and had a way of turning down her lips bitterly. She had that acrid, bitter thing too about her body, a kind of sourness as if she had abandoned it. It was like an abandoned thing, perhaps it had not

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been occupied. The Puritans used the body like the land as a commodity, and the land and the body resent it. She never took a bath except under her shift. Hearing her move about her room alone I always wondered what she was doing, so bodyless, with that acrid odor as if she had buried her body, murdered and buried it, and it gave off this secret odor revealing the place where it lay.

Yet she was faithful to her duties, dogged in her service to those she loved, but it seemed to be a sacrifice without joy, a love without passion, and her children, like the children of every one, seemed to have been born without contact.

Pleasure of any kind was wicked, and she never lay down in the daytime even when she was dreadfully tired. It would have been a kind of licentiousness to her to have done so.

This coldness in her and severity gave her that sense of always spying on others, and she did have that passionate curiosity that comes in people marooned in any way from life by spiritual or physical illness. But religion was her theatre, her dance, her wine, her song. Every night sitting bolt upright in her strong stiff body she sang these haunting hymns, picking them out in dull chords on the untuned piano. It was a long time before I knew that they were her love songs, the only ones she and others had. With a brilliant husband and four children, still she was mysteriously marooned, unliving and ghostlike without abundance or contact, without bloom in her body, without essential growth or maturity.

The evening would come down soft and sweet, and we would set out for the revival, my grandmother very stiff and self-conscious in her best silk, walking ahead, her black Bible in her gloved hands, and smiling that little smirk at her neighbors as if she knew something about them. Other people would be going sedately toward the little steepled church, and the young girls, arm in arm, and the boys together standing outside the church door, the boys standing brazenly watching the girls go in. Then they would come in a gang and sit in the balcony, looking down at the girls who would be in an agony of self-consciousness.

We would all greet each other, each thinking that the other had every cause to repent, but still more cordial than at ice-cream socials. Then every one in his best clothes in the packed brilliant church, the stir of starched clothes, the smell of violet water, and the bright faces of the choir so rosy, looking for the preacher. At last he would come out, melancholy and conscious, and sit down not knowing what to do with his hands, an unknown man to them all, a stranger from another part come into the town to stir them; and they were ready to be stirred, their close ungiven bodies ready to be mysteriously stirred by this stranger.

When I joined the church there was a red-headed Irishman who was the evangelist, a man of monstrous amorous vitality which he threw into his sermons, a great, wild vitality wonderful to behold and a silver Irish tongue too, so that he broke all the bitterness asunder, the silvery words breaking over the land-locked, corroded people. He was a fine actor, and had a fine roll to his words and a great sonorous natural cadence that added richness to our terse Yankee speech for many days after.

Then the hymns, and still the congregation, awkward, unwelded, and the wild-bucking youth in the balcony giving a feeling of something a little dangerous.

Then he rose and put back his thick hair, just a little longer than the men in

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the town wore theirs, and he let his great words have their way, flow over the hungry people, and they were unafraid because they were packed so closely, because it was impersonal and the great words fell like fruit upon famine, —"This is my body. . . . I have died to save you. . . . Come unto me all ye who are heavy laden and I will give you rest,"—and women who had never given one whit of love to their husbands or children let tears of love spring to their eyes and wept quite unashamed, and the young girls were hushed and the giant men sat dumb, shamefaced, and the boys with their mouths frozen in a guffaw. The close-weeping pack again welded, brought together, moving close in lovely formation.

"Let us sing the hymn of invitation. Come to your Savior now. Acknowledge him, my sisters, my brothers. . . ." O, the weeping now! "Come to Jesus who died for love of you."

"Oh, comfort me with apples, stay me with flagons. . . ." The breaking open at last. The choir singing, O sweetly, wondrously: "Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly. . . ." And these people without another love song, untinged by humor. The weeping women going to the altar and the men being pushed and herded and some weeping.

Afterward, leaving the bright turmoil of the church, outside the boys lined up waiting to take the girls home and the night sweeter than a nut, at last with the stars now with meaning, the town now close and beloved, broken open with love, and all the rich juices flowing out as from some ripe sweet fruit. And the girls in ecstasy and love. And all filled with awe for those who had confessed, and the newly saved silent and tearful, and every one tender with them. And the closed houses breaking open, cracking open like nuts, and the lovely faces looking out, and Jesus with his lovely face too, and the obscure, the terrible ecstasy over the town.

But the revival ends too and the stranger leaves the town. The sinners forget they have been saved. The great midcontinent vacuum swallows everything again. Everything is quiet until the cornhusking, and that means work and competition.

Oh, Kansas, I know all your little trees. I have watched them thaw and bud and the pools of winter frozen over, the silos and the corn-blue sky, the wagon-tracked road with the prints of hoofs, going where? And the little creeks gullying with delicate grasses and animals, the prairie dog, the rabbit, and your country with its sense of ruin and desolation like a strong raped virgin. And the wind scurrying like a rabbit trying to get into your meaning, making things up about you, trying to get you alive with significance and myth.

I have seen the spring like an idiotic lost peasant come over your prairies scattering those incredibly tiny flowers, and the frozen earth thaw to black mud, and a mist of greening come on the thickets, and the birds coming from the South, black in the sky, and farmers coming to the village through the black mud.

I have seen your beauty and your terror and your evil.

I have come from you mysteriously wounded. I have waked from my adolescence to find a wound inflicted on the deep heart. And have seen it in others too, in disabled men and sour women made ugly by ambition, mortified in the flesh and wounded in love.

Not going to Paris or Morocco or Venice, instead staying with you, trying to be in love with you, bent upon understanding you, bringing you to life. For your life is my life and your death is mine also.

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Two Years

By EMMETT GOWEN

I ONCE tried to write this story as fiction, to pretend that the events of it never really happened, but I could do nothing with it that way. Short stories have to be plotted, and I could not make the literal truth shape itself to fit a plot. In conventional fiction of one sort, I should have married the colonel's daughter and lived happily ever after, or in fiction to suit another taste, the young man should have gone through with his intention of hanging himself from the ceiling bars of his cell by a noose made from his belt.

I have decided to tell the facts. I may blush at the facts, but that is all right. It takes an effort of will to say that, although I did prepare the noose and fasten one end to the top of the cell, I did not have what it would take to accept voluntarily the physical discomforts of hanging. It is even harder to say that Elizabeth Hall, for whom I wanted to make the gesture of supreme abnegation, had no reason, beyond the fact that she would have had a normal distaste for actual tragedy, to care whether I hung myself or not.

And now, as they say, go on with the story.

I was a nineteen-year-old private in the Marines when I got involved in the trouble which was to result in my being court-martialled and sentenced to five years (subsequently reduced to three) in the Naval Prison at Parris Island. As nineteen will, I had come to consider myself a devil of a fellow, an adventurer escaped from the pages of swashbuckling fiction. I had been around. I had deserted the hill farm in Tennessee at sixteen, and made my own way for a year as a house-painter, lineman's helper, truck-driver. I had been, for nearly two years, a Marine, sea-going and land-lubbing. I had fought in skirmishes with Haitian bandits and had received the scar of a *machete*. I had once been drunk in St. Croix for a month on the marvellous rum for which the island is famous. I had fought over West Indian beauties. I had won an expert-rifleman medal, a swimming championship, had been put up for promotion to sergeant and was then within an inch of growing to six feet tall, all of which seemed of great importance. I was young enough to think that such things made me experienced and hard-boiled, capable of subduing my destiny with knuckled fists. Naturally, I was ripe for getting into trouble.

The opportunity soon came.

The enlisted personnel of the Marine detachment at Charleston, S. C., where I was sent for discharge toward the end of my enlistment, was having unofficial difficulties with the police. The cops were "riding" us, arresting Marines upon any pretext at all. They made it a practical impossibility for a Marine to enjoy the amusement facilities of the town without getting locked up in the police station. Hostility grew. One night a Marine was caught doing a little quiet love-making in a vacant lot. The Marine got shot up rather badly.

We decided to teach the policemen a lesson. The plan resolved itself into one to raid the police-station, take command and lock the cops up in their own cells. This we set out to do.

In the planning of that project I had

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no part beyond being one of those who were willing to go along. It was not until about twenty of us were in the station-house, with the night police force cowering and trembling before our rifles, that I took any active part. At this stage I became conspicuous by declaring that all this was going to get us into trouble with the commanding officer, unless we hurried back to the barracks before we were missed. This subsequently enabled the police to identify me as being a leader in the prank.

Eight of us went to the brig. We were kept there two months, awaiting a court martial and its outcome. We were not worried, for we felt certain that we would be acquitted. We were in high spirits when we were led out in front of the detachment to receive the verdict. The formalities entailed a parade, and then we were marched, under guard, out in front of ranks standing at attention. In spite of our handcuffs, I think we enjoyed being in the limelight.

I tried to guess from the face of the Officer of the Day what our fate would be. His face was expressionless. He reminded me of a man playing poker, the way he looked blank and held up a sheaf of papers, like a hand of cards, in front of him. He stood with his heels together, his field hat tilted a little over his right eye, his boots and the butt of his automatic catching a gleam of spring sunshine. He came to my name first.

"Gowen, Samuel Emmett, private first class."

"Here, sir."

He began to read and my spirits sank into my leggings.

"Found guilty and sentenced to five years . . ." He read on in a droning sing-song. . . .

I remember that I wanted to cry, and, like a child, I began to long for my mother. I tried to grin, like the devil-may-care fellow that I fancied I was, but when I forced my facial muscles there was a peculiar reaction in my stomach. I nearly vomited.

That sickening sensation was to stay with me for weeks, like something gnawing in my belly.

At nineteen a blow like that is too much. It was for me, because I was caught without any philosophical self-sufficiency to protect me from the shock of the sentence. In one moment, all my hopes were lost, all my conceits taken away.

Looking back on it I think that what happened to me, psychologically, was that all my thought processes were shattered, my habits of character disconnected. Hitherto, I had held an all's-right conception of life and now the refutation of everything was being practised on my own person. Disillusionments, which must come in every intelligent life, should come gradually, a few at a time, and not all at once like that. That way it was horrible, terrifying, nightmarish.

The sense of nightmare passed gradually, after I had been taken to the prison, and had begun to adapt myself to a grotesque new world—a world locked, iron-barred, gun-guarded. I got used to hob-nailed shoes and learned to ignore the constant itching of the rough wool of the prison garb. I choked down, with equal indifference, the prison food and the stupid insults of the guards. I learned to enjoy, as a luxury, any cigarette stub I could surreptitiously garner from the gutter when out with laboring gangs. . . . In prison men learn to forget misery, and some even seem to become comparatively happy, like men who sing in trenches because their guts have not yet been blown out. I soon got used to everything except the sense of terror which I always had when I was locked up in a cell at night.

First there was a phase of defensive

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indifference and then I had a period of foolish hope. Like all other prisoners, I refused to believe that I would serve the full term of my sentence. I chose to believe that the miracle would happen and that almost any day would bring the order for my release. A minor miracle did come to pass, for the gods in Washington decreed that five years was too severe a sentence for my offense. They made it three. It meant that, with perfect conduct and with the luck not to get a single blemish on my prison record, I could get one-third "good time," and, therefore, the time I would serve stood at two years. Without the miracle I could not get out under that time. Yet I refused to believe that I would stay in prison so long. The miracle *would* happen. I knew it. When I doubted it, the gnawing started again at the pit of my stomach.

My hope, even though it was foolish and futile, had the effect of lifting me out of despair. I was waiting. I regained the ability to be interested in the passing days. I sought after such prizes as a package of cigarettes or a chocolate bar; I strained after neatness by folding my trousers under my mattress at night, so they would look pressed in the morning. I ate rough food with relish and slept well. If I slept with my mouth open and a cockroach crawled in, as often happened, I spat it out and went back to sleep. I conceived an ambition—to shine as a model prisoner and be made a trusty.

One night Ritchie, who was president of the Mutual Welfare League and also a Jimmylegs (a trusty with authority over other prisoners), came into Number Two Brig with a list of names. The bell clanged for attention. I was in the washroom scrubbing my underwear in a bucket. My name was called out, along with the others on the list.

"You guys stand by at the door," Ritchie ordered.

After a while the sentry turned his key in the lock and let us out. Always before, there had been guards with shotguns to escort us. Now there were none.

"Go to the Main Brig," Ritchie said.

It seemed strange to walk that short distance from Number Two Brig to the Main Brig without a guard. It made the floodlights seem festive. There was a sweet taste to the air that blew in from the sea over the marshes at night. It was good to sniff it without fear of offending a Leatherneck sentry.

We were let into the Main Brig and taken to the Mutual Welfare League office. The officers of the league were there. The warden, a Marine Corps first sergeant, sat in a chair tilted against the wall.

"The warden wants to talk to you guys," Ritchie said.

The warden did not like to talk. "You tell 'em, Ritchie," he said.

"Okay, warden," Ritchie said. He began making us a speech.

"You birds have all been here long enough to know what the Mutual Welfare League stands for. It makes things easier for us. We gotta thank it that we got the honor system in this jail. We're damned lucky we got it, and we're lucky we got a warden that believes in it, and tries to make things easier for us . . ."

Ritchie spoke at length, with much indirect flattery for the warden. Then he had us hold up our right hands and swear an oath not to attempt escape.

While this was going on, I became aware that Kraus, who had been sentenced with me, was trying to get my eye. In the middle of the oath, he gave me a surreptitious wink. That wink said, as plainly as words:

"They're making us trusties and now we can get away."

I tried to look innocent.

We went back to the tailor-shop to have the insignia of trusties (a white star

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in a circle) sewed on our sleeves. Kraus nudged me and whispered:

"A good swimmer could get to the mainland."

"Careful. Some stool-pigeon might hear you." I was nervous.

"It's not over two miles when the tide is low," Kraus said.

My job as a trusty was to serve as house orderly for Colonel Hall, the commanding officer of the Marine detachment on the island. I was allowed out of the prison from daylight until dark, although I had to report at the guard-room twice during the day. The work was easy, after having been on a laboring gang unloading from barges an endless supply of cement. I polished boots with hot-eyed resentment, but with an awareness that they were not as heavy as cement sacks. I trembled with rage when the colonel's cook, a St. Helena negress, lorded it over me, but I liked her simple-hearted kindliness when she handed out dainties from the colonel's table.

I think my young manhood was affronted worst of all when I was asked to take Mrs. Hall's snippy little lap-dog out for an airing, but when Elizabeth came along one day I felt differently about it. After that, I looked forward to taking the dog out, and I was happy whenever Elizabeth came out, too.

Elizabeth was the older of the colonel's two daughters. She was sixteen, and at that age she was full-figured and pretty. It is hard to describe her looks beyond saying that most of the blonde, blue-eyed girls on magazine covers seem to have been drawn from her, and many of those type-beauties, to this day, give me a start of recognition. Her very femininity was, somehow, a marvellous phenomenon; for at nineteen one may be oversensitized to sex, and, besides, I lived in the womanless world of prison. The sound of her voice invariably sent the prickle of a thrill through me; to walk beside her, leading the dog, was an experience that made my knees feel weak.

I think my breathless adoration must have flattered her. Perhaps also she may have been intrigued by my maleness, may have found it a novelty, since she was still being treated as a child by her parents, and saw no young men. Anyway, she got into a habit of finding pretexts to be with me.

Elizabeth used to ask me questions about myself. I lied and exaggerated, trying to make myself seem heroic, while, at the moment, I would feel menial and ashamed, for the conversation might be going on during my polishing of her father's boots.

She liked to talk about getting married some day.

"Of course, I'll marry a Marine officer. I don't like Naval officers."

"But how about a civilian?" I was beginning to have dreams about what I might do when *I* became a civilian.

"Oh, I hate civilians."

"But there are interesting civilians. Lawyers, artists—" (I hadn't decided whether I would be an attorney or a painter.) "A lawyer might make a lot of money for you."

"He'd probably wear glasses and be stoop-shouldered. No, I'd never marry a civilian."

The conversation made me unhappy.

Even though she intensified my sense of inferiority and disgrace, I think that knowing her must have revived in me something that prison usually kills. Prison breaks a man's spirit, and makes of him a psychological gelding. Prisons are run with an evil cleverness, and everything is insidiously arranged to break a man, to tear out of him all self-assurance, all individuality. I have verified this by subsequently meeting some of the derelicts turned helplessly loose in

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the world by the institution where I was. It takes sadistic guards but a little while to knock the spirit out of you, and sometimes they do it literally, with a club. They did this to me, but I think Elizabeth restored it.

She made me feel hopeless and inferior, but, paradoxically, she restored my pride. She gave me back the power to have dreams and hopes. From developing a habit of trying to wear my gray uniform with an air, I progressed to one of planning beyond the end of my term. I think that when I began bribing the prison tailor to keep my pants pressed there was something more complex happening to my character.

Meanwhile, Kraus was making plans for our escape. I didn't want to get away. I told myself that I wanted to finish my sentence and face the outside—the vague, wonderful outside that prisoners talk of as if it were paradise—without the handicap of being a fugitive. Yet I think the real reason I wanted to stay was to remain near Elizabeth. Even prison was not too much to suffer just to see her for a few minutes each day.

I could not bring myself to telling Kraus that I would not go. He would have accused me of being afraid. I had no fear of the possibility of being shot by guards, or of being recaptured, beaten, and given more time, yet I was afraid of what Kraus might think of me if I refused to go. Fear of an opinion was, as it so often is, greater than fear of personal injury. And so I let myself be kept in the plan.

Perhaps I would escape with Kraus. It pleased me to consider how surprised Elizabeth would be when she learned that her meek little prisoner had made a daring escape. In the end, I made up my mind to go.

Elizabeth unwittingly influenced my decision, as she influenced practically everything I thought and did. This she accomplished, innocently, by making me jealous. A stable sergeant was teaching her to ride, and when she began to talk about how handsome and how charming the sergeant was, I fairly choked with hidden rage. Her talk was mere prattle, but it made me desperate.

That night, in the barracks where the trusties were locked after dark, I visited Kraus at his bunk. We sat on the lower of the bed's two decks and smoked, while we waited for a chance to talk without being overheard.

"Well, kid, everything's set," Kraus said. "The boat is all ready and to-day I made some paddles for it."

As a trusty, Kraus had a job at the garbage dump, at a remote spot on the shore of the island, and he had been able to repair an old abandoned boat. He kept it hidden in the swamp.

"When do we go?" I asked.

"When do you say?"

"Let's make it soon—to-morrow."

"No, we better make it Saturday," Kraus said.

I wondered why he wanted to wait, and extend the chance of the boat's being found. The next day would have done as well as Saturday. Our plan was to go to the boat at dark, when we were supposed to report in at the prison. We would simply put out in the boat and be rowing for the mainland by the time they missed us.

However, I did not challenge his wanting to wait until Saturday. After all, he had taken the leadership; they were his plans, his boat.

I gave Kraus some cigarettes and went back to my own bunk.

The next day I had a talk with Elizabeth. I was turning the crank of the ice-cream freezer for the cook, when Elizabeth came out and sat on the kitchen steps. She had on breeches and riding-boots. Wind had teased some strands of hair loose from the knot at the back

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of her head and the blond wisps blew around her face. She had been riding with the stable sergeant. I was bitter about that.

"How is your sergeant?" I asked, trying to manage an inflection of sarcasm mixed with unconcern.

"I don't like him any more," she said, with a laugh. "He smells like the stables."

"You ought not to mind that. He is *handsome*. And *so* charming!"

"Oh, that doesn't matter," she said.

"Why not?"

"Why, I couldn't ever care for an enlisted man."

Elizabeth uttered the words, but it was not she who was speaking. It was an utterance of the Marine Corps, of a military system.

"I'd even turn down Rudolph Valentino if he were an enlisted man," she said.

I turned the freezer crank furiously. I had wanted to tell her of my romantic ambitions, to paint for her with words a vision of a fictive lover, laden with honors and successes, coming back to her. Instead I saw the futility of the whole of my dream. I did not see it in its true terms, but I saw it like this: she would never care for an enlisted man; I was a prisoner and, therefore, still further beneath her.

She got up and went back into the house. After a little while she came out again, and held out to me a pair of tan boots.

"Mother says will you please shine Father's boots for the parade to-morrow."

Those eternal boots! They symbolized the whole of my grievance. Because officers wore boots, I was in prison. Because they wore shiny, leather boots, she was to be forever remote from me. I loved her and she handed me a pair of boots to shine.

"And so I have to shine the boots that trample me!" I said bitterly.

She took the boots back. "I always thought you didn't like to shine them," she said. "I'm going to tell Father not to make you do it any more."

"No, I'll do it," I said. "Somebody has to shine them. No colonel could ever polish his own boots."

We each insisted. Finally, she went back into the house.

Later in the day she came out wearing a new summer frock. I was sitting on the steps polishing the boots.

She told me in detail about the fact that she was going with her mother on the Savannah boat to visit somebody in Savannah.

"We won't be back until Sunday," she told me.

"You'll never see me again," I said bitterly.

When she began to question me as to what I meant, I tried to make it seem that I had merely made a silly remark. When her mother called her into the house, to get ready for the visit, she was puzzled.

At the door she turned and gave me a glance that was casual, but nevertheless thrilling.

"See you Sunday," she said.

See me Sunday? She would not! Sunday I would be free. A fugitive but—*free!*

That night, when count of the prisoners was made, we were not given "at ease." They kept us standing at attention. After a while the guards came thumping along again, taking another count. The sergeant looked worried.

Still we were kept at attention. A third count was made. There was a slight rustle of excitement among the prisoners, at something we felt rather than heard: somebody missing!

A roll-call was taken next. Meanwhile,

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over at the guard detachment's barracks, a bugle was blowing "Call to Arms." Marines, in squads, ran with their rifles past the windows. In the distance could be heard the spluttering noise of motor-kicker engines being started.

A little later word of who was gone went through the prison. A man whose name I don't remember—and Kraus!

The liar! The double-crosser! Obviously, he had decided that somebody else could be more help to him in getting away than I could. Yet he had chosen to keep me thinking I was in on his plans. My feelings were hurt.

The next day I went before the commanding officer of the prison, and asked to be relieved of my job as Colonel Hall's orderly.

The commanding officer was an irascible Marine Corps Colonel who was called Terrible Terry Williams behind his back. He was a tall, lean man with a face made ugly by the lines of evil temper and arrogance. Prisoners walked into his office on trembling legs. I did.

When I told him what I wanted, he rose over his desk and began screaming at me in rage. He wanted to know why I asked to have my job changed. "Why?" he yelled. I stammered some silly excuse, to which he did not listen.

"You have a good job and you're not satisfied!" he shrieked into my face. "That's the way with all of you goddam rats! Perhaps you'd like some hard work. Some *hard* work! Well, I'm going to give you something nice and soft. Garbage. . . . Sergeant, take the son-of-a bitch out of here and put him on the garbage-truck!"

And on the garbage-truck I went. It was the most dreaded detail in the prison. A Marine drove the truck and six prisoners loaded it. We ran, each of us, from the truck to a can in its route ahead. You grabbed up the can, threw it up to a prisoner on the truck, who emptied it and threw it back. Then you replaced it in its screened box and ran ahead to another one. The truck never stopped. You had to work on the run for hours at a stretch, with garbage and slops spilling into your face, oozing down your neck. If you were too weak to stand all the running, you either quit or you passed out. In either event, you went to the cell-block for solitary if you failed. And when you went to the cell-block, you automatically lost your "good-time" and had to serve a third longer. There were times when my aching, panting body tried to assert a will independent of my mind, and simply lie down on the ground. I can think of only one word to apply to that daily garbage marathon—*horrible!*

It was humiliating, too, for only prisoners in disfavor were put on that job. Worse yet; I was aware that Elizabeth must, sooner or later, see me when the truck passed the colonel's house—see me trotting along with a garbage-can on my shoulder. Sometimes I had a feeling that she was looking at me out of the window, but I would not turn my face in that direction to see if she was.

I think the sum total of all these humiliations and hardships and disillusionments was what gave me the passion for knowledge, which, as I look back upon it, seems to have come all at once. I had never before concerned myself in the least with what lies between the covers of books. I had received no formal education before I left home, schools not being considered important in the Tennessee backwoods. I was practically illiterate. And yet I was obsessed by a desire to know everything. I tackled the prison library with all the vigor I had left from garbage carrying. At three in the afternoon, when all the garbage of the post had been gathered, I would

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rush straight to the library. From then until taps, at ten, I read passionately.

I began by selecting tomes for the solemnity of their titles, the dignity of their formats. At first I had to go slowly, puzzling out the meanings of unfamiliar words. I wanted to read faster, to cover more ground. A friend being discharged was commissioned to send me in a dictionary from the outside. He sent it, and I made a rule never to go past a word I did not understand.

Of course, I read a great deal of drivel. In fact, good books were in the minority, at first. I had to find out. I had to read everything to find the things I needed.

As the months went along, the books and their print-rendered information became more and more my reality. Elizabeth seemed like a creature in a dream more than a girl over whom I had driven myself half crazy. She was a dream and a sensation of excitement that lasted for a moment each day, as the garbage-truck passed her house. The garbage-truck was not even a dream; I worked automatically, my consciousness occupied with the knowledge I was acquiring. I forgot even the stench which clung always to me, which stayed with me after I had finished the day's work and had scrubbed myself with sea-soap.

I was not merely reading; I was studying. My studies were not classified under headings. Fiction, biography, history, economics, psychology, philosophy, natural history—all were fed indiscriminately to the appetite of my awakening mind. The prison library was a good one. When I found my way out of the maze of printed trash, I could find on the shelves nearly anything I needed to suit my forming tastes.

I remember that at this time I thought of my mind as something burning like a fire, and of each book as fresh fuel to make the flames leap higher, to shed more light. I fed the fire with everything. As I made progress, I decided that I must take up Latin and Mathematics. They were hard come by. They required slow, ponderous study. I had to arrive, timorously, at correct pronunciations in Latin by a process of logic (I usually got them wrong). Latin was labor; you can't race through Ovid as you can "Creasy's Decisive Battles of the World." I was impatient about mathematics; you can't solve with a glance a problem in geometry.

Not wanting to waste from my studies the time spent on the garbage-truck, I copied poetry out of books, to memorize while at work. Thus I trotted from garbage-can to garbage-can memorizing verse, mouthing the exquisite words of a sonnet, with slops running down my neck from the can on my shoulder. Now and then I snatched a glance at my "script," which I carried in my cap next to my clipped head.

My fellow prisoners thought I had gone crazy; perhaps I had. At least, I had become a fanatic.

And, as most fanatics do, I acquired disciples. I didn't want them, but they formed a cult for seeking learning and I was their leader. There was the Norwegian sailor who tried to teach me French in return for my tutoring him in reading, spelling and arithmetic; there were half a dozen young men who made me direct them in ways of "improving the mind"; there was George Russell, who seemed to me very cultured, and with him I debated problems of the world as fast as I learned what the problems were. With my disciples, I was always their superior, for my intensity was always greater than theirs; I was always ahead of them in whatever subject they wanted my help in. I may have been only one or two volumes ahead of them, but they did not think of that.

Elizabeth was, in some vague way, back of all this. Perhaps it was some

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mixed-up desire of the male to shine in the eyes of the female, some psychological motive twisted by prison into a pathological one. I don't know just how she was back of it. I do know that she was. I know that every time I turned a good phrase in my arguments with George Russell, I thought of Elizabeth, and wished that she could have heard me. Sometimes, with her image in my mind, I would mutter passionately:

"I'll show you, darling. I'll prove that I'm good enough for you!"

One day my reading got me into trouble. It was Sunday, and not having to work, I was blissfully spending the whole long day on my bunk, in the midst of an armful of books. A Marine came in and formed a detail of prisoners to go down to the docks and unload baggage from the Savannah boat. I was one of them. As a trusty, I was to go to the docks without a guard, and be there when the boat came in.

The other men on the detail filed out of the brig, but I remained on my bunk with a volume titled "Meditations of Marcus Aurelius." I did not intend to disobey the Marine; I merely failed to heed his command.

I was, regardless of my intentions, or lack of them, put up for "office hours" next day.

Old Terrible Terry raged and screamed at me until he was swollen and spluttering.

It was a terrifying thing to feel your fate in the malignant hands of Terrible Terry. You trembled, and were half stunned by the severity of his punishments; and when the guard took you out of the office, he led you through the guard-room and unlocked a small, steel-barred door in the back. Beyond that door was the extra-punishment cell-block.

Terrible Terry gave me a punishment as unthought as his oaths.

"Ten days bread and water, sixty days solitary, loss of all 'good time'!"

I had never seen the inside of Number Four Cell-Block and had hoped that I never would. It was a dreaded place, and its associations were as dark and evil as its windowless interior. Its name was a synonym for foulness, for pain, for horror. That little grated door through which I was pushed shut in the secrets of the prison. I was to learn them by the sounds from the other solitary-confinement cells. There was an insane man in there, keeping up an unearthly shrieking and wailing, battering himself against the bars, when he should have been receiving treatment in the hospital. There was a drug addict whom the guards clubbed for begging for drugs. A boy who was hidden away in there to save from court martial the Marines who had beaten him nearly to death. A man who had attempted murder. And also there were those like myself, who had done little more than become objects for the malevolence of Terrible Terry.

Kraus and the man who had attempted escape with him were in there. They had been re-court-martialled, given an added sentence of three years and now were to be removed to the Naval Prison at Portsmouth.

Everybody in that cell-block was on solitary confinement, and it was a crime to open your mouth in speech, but one day in the toilet I had a few words with Kraus.

"How did they catch you?" I asked him.

"We couldn't get out of those swamps over there," he said. "There are only two ways out, the causeway and the railroad trestle. They just waited for us. They got us on the railroad trestle."

"Did they beat you?"

"*They* didn't—they made some of the guys here do it."

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"Why?"

"It's against the rules for guards to beat prisoners," Kraus said. "So they *have* it done, and watch it."

"But they do beat up men themselves."

"Not men who would take their bruises before the officers of a court-martial board," Kraus said. "Just those they can lock up in here until they get well."

The first few days of solitary confinement are not so bad, when you are already used to being locked in cells. It gets you gradually. In the first place, the bread-and-water diet puts you in a highly sensitized state of mind, and the ordinary dumb acceptance is replaced by a full awareness of the horror of prison. There is something profoundly terrible about being locked up, day after day, week after week, in a cell that is cold and bare and dark. You have spells of panic. You suffer from an instinctive terror that comes of utter hopelessness. You go crazy. . . .

One day George Russell was brought into the cell-block for solitary confinement. As he passed my cell, he tossed through the bars a tiny book. It was a vest-pocket edition of "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," to me a greater present than a fortune would be to a man in a bread-line.

By luck I saved it from the guards who were continually searching us. It was very small, leather bound, and I could roll it up and hide it between my legs. For weeks and weeks it was all that I had between myself and the mad terror. The irony of it—reading of red wine, of song, of love, reading with peering, aching eyes in the ghostly, dungeon light of the cell. . . . After a while I knew it all by heart. . . .

And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,
Whereunder crawling cooped we live and die,
Lift not your hands to *It* for help—for It
As impotently moves as you or I.

The story has no climax. I lived through the cell-block experience, and when it was over, I was put to work on a laboring gang. We worked on the dock, under guard, as stevedores. I had three months more to serve before I would have two years done. Then I would begin on the final year, which I would have to bear because Terrible Terry liked to rule his prison with an iron hand.

However, Terrible Terry was relieved from duty as commanding officer of the prison at about that time. His successor restored the "good time" of all prisoners whose records did not justify its having been taken away. That left me with just three more months to serve.

One day on the dock I noticed some boxes of furniture with Colonel Hall's name on them. When the Savannah boat docked, we put the boxes aboard. Obviously, the colonel was being transferred.

Just before time for the boat to leave, I saw the colonel and his family coming down the dock. Elizabeth was leading the dog, walking a little ahead. She had her hat in her hand and the wind from the sea was blowing her blond hair, so that she walked with her head down. She had not seen me.

I tried to avoid being seen by stepping behind a pile of boxes. The guard put his hand on the butt of his pistol.

"Come out from there!" he said.

I came out from behind the boxes and Elizabeth saw me. Our eyes met for an instant and she looked away. I went to work with the other prisoners loading tins of gasoline on a truck.

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Oklahoma Race Riot

By FRANCES W. PRENTICE

It happened because a girl was hysterical, and a newspaper item got past the copy desk worded a little more strongly than it should have been. The girl took it back later, and the newspaper perfectly properly said its function was to give the news of the town. But some forty people were dead by then, and half the town burned up.

Maybe it didn't actually start at either of those sources. You heard people say afterward that the niggers had been getting above themselves; that race riots just naturally break loose every now and then anyway, and probably they're good things.

This curious philosophy is not a sectional affair. It doesn't spring exclusively from the smouldering animosities of ex-slave owner and ex-slave. Chicago and St. Louis, safely above the Mason and Dixon line, one would think, have each produced something in the way of records for race riots. Oklahoma hugs no bitter local traditions; they haven't had time for traditions yet. Only a few years ago the State was Indian territory; even the Indians were mostly not natives. The citizens are from any State you care to mention. About all they have in common is a variegated American tongue, a spirit of adventure (generally genial), and an interest in crude oil.

Impossible to guess, then, where this spark smoulders, or what will fan it. Perhaps it smokes always in the darkness of small minds and huge uncontrol.

At any rate——

The Negro section was rumbling with it at four o'clock in the afternoon. There are always agitators, and the sober, fearful members of the race have a hard time hushing them up. They tried hushing them. Grave-faced black men, ministers, church deacons, real-estate owners, doctors, went in to the back rooms of the short-order barbecue parlors and pleaded with the hot-heads. "Don't, boys. Don't you all go over there. You'll get us all burned out. You can't do no good. Don't go mixing in. Wait and see, boys. Maybe it's just talk. Maybe they ain't fixing to do nothing to Jim. The sheriff's a good man. He won't let them take Jim. He's the law. Don't, boys. Don't before God go over there!"

But the hot-heads were malcontents anyway. They had listened with too much imagination and too little common sense to orators who told them that the Negro was exploited and downtrodden; that if he didn't assert himself, and protect his race from the whites, what could he expect? The choc beer in those back parlors is strong stuff. It burned in the brains of the mutterers. Oklahoma wasn't the deep South, was it? Pshaw! They'd show the white folks you couldn't lynch no colored boy these days. Let the old men go along with their gloomy hushings. They'd see.

And they did see.

The town is divided straight across by railroad tracks. One side is nigger town; on the other side the whites live. The jail is in the heart of the business section. And the boy Jim was in the jail for insulting a white girl in an elevator that morning. She said later she thought she stumbled against him herself, and was just nervous, so she screamed. But no matter.

At seven o'clock three cars full of

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Negroes, with guns gleaming in their hands, drove over and began circling the square around the jail. Cars full of armed and half-drunk Negroes are not a popular sight in Southwestern towns. They meant to make a jail delivery; get the boy Jim out. But—fatally—they didn't quite know how to go about it. And—fatally—the sheriff didn't quite know how to stop the business and get rid of them. So he stood at a window in his office and watched.

White men began to drift in to the hot dusty square, singly and in groups. At the end of half an hour there was a big crowd. A muttering, angry crowd, waiting to see what those niggers thought they were pulling, anyway. The crowd didn't quite know what it wanted to do, either. But it was ready for anything. And then the inaction, and the breathless shifting and whispering, got on someone's nerves. Somebody fired a gun at one of the Negro cars. And one of its occupants fired back. No one was touched by those first nervous bullets. But they set the race riot off, and all the sheriffs in the country couldn't have stopped it then, though the sheriff in the window could probably have stopped it ten minutes before.

The crowd closed in on those three cars, and the Negroes deserted them, and began to run and scatter. The first one was shot on the main street, right in front of the biggest white picture palace. He lay writhing on the sidewalk, under a billboard from which smiled winsomely the face of Mary Pickford, America's Sweetheart.

His falling brought the crowd to a halt. They stood and looked at him. He was hit in the stomach, and bleeding a good deal. Three or four people must have telephoned for ambulances, because three or four ambulances clanged down to the place. But the crowd turned on them, and showed their guns. Get to hell back out of here. Don't touch the blankety blank. The ambulances didn't quite know what to do, either. So they turned off their engines and just stood there, blocking the street.

Then there was a whoop a block away. Some of the Negroes had tried to organize and get to their friend, flourishing those useless, foolish guns again. The crowd surged forward, trampling the man on the sidewalk, who was about dead anyway. The hunt was on for fair then, and there was no pausing for fourteen hours.

By midnight all the blacks who had come over in the three cars had been accounted for. They lay in alleys, or on sidewalks, or huddled in doorways. The sheriff had made up for his earlier lack of zeal, and sworn in as deputies every armed white man who came into the court-house. The oaths were a mere form. Every hardware store, every pawn shop in town had been broken into, and the firearms and ammunition taken without formality. Also a good many bathing-suits, coats, tools, tires, and little things like watches disappeared. Whether these were for immediate or future use no one stopped to inquire at the time. Every one was pretty excited, and trigger fingers were so limber that night that there was very little arguing with people about their whims.

The shooting was constant now. Pop! Pop! Pop-pop-pop-pop-pop! Not a pretty sound on the warm night air.

A melancholy and terrifying sound, heard in tense helplessness, where we sat on our porch, a dozen city blocks from the scene of activity. Behind us in the dark house slept a baby and an old Negress servant. Quite a number of the neighbors had gone down to see the fun. The woman next door moaned in high hysteria. Her husband, a good automatic Georgian, had taken down his bird gun and gone off to work. She felt worried

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about him, but really she needn't have. As it turned out the blacks were very inadequately armed, beside being hampered by their women and children, and vastly outnumbered.

Of course the women and children didn't get in the line of fire until around one in the morning. That was when the fighting got into their territory. The mob worked steadily down to the railroad tracks, and then across them. Some Negroes hid in a house just on the black side of the tracks, and tried to snipe out the windows. That was the place where the one white man was killed. It was also the place which suggested to the mob that fire would be effective and exciting. Whether that first house was set on fire, or caught by accident, was never quite clear. But the rest of the fires were set. Or perhaps thrown would be a more exact term.

The technic varied with different groups of the mob. But the general procedure was to go up to a cabin door and put a gun against the lock, and blow it off. The flimsy doors would have smashed easily enough; but this was gun night. Once inside the cabin everything breakable was broken, trunks and bureau drawers torn open, pictures and telephones wrenched off the walls and trampled on. They didn't often find any one in the houses, because by now the blacks were scurrying ahead of the horror, out into the hill country beyond the town. But sometimes they did find some one—with whom they dealt. When they had smashed enough they scattered around a little kerosene and threw some lighted matches in the mess. If this particular cabin didn't burn well it would be reset presently by the blaze of the one next door. The houses the mob set fire to without breaking in first were really the most unlucky. Because sometimes there were people in them. Panic-paralyzed people who didn't realize, with all the noise and fright, that the house was on fire. Not until it was too late to get out.

By two o'clock most of the houses in nigger town were ablaze. By dawn all of them were. The fire engines made a half-hearted attempt to get in and do something about it. It didn't hardly seem safe for the rest of the town, with the wind blowing and all. But the mob met the engines as it had met the ambulances. Get to hell out of here. Leave these blank blank double-blank niggers to us. A good deal of buckshot was fired into the radiators of the engines. They wavered around a little, and then withdrew. Nobody could do anything against that mob by then, anyhow. And the nigger houses weren't worth much.

There was never an accurate estimate of how many were killed that night. One white man, surely. One Mexican. The dozen Mexicans in the mob enjoyed themselves thoroughly. The Mexican laborer doesn't often have the privilege of shooting shoulder to shoulder with the whites, and he made the best of it.

The sound of shooting began to be as familiar in the hot interminable night as is the ripping hum of locusts in a summer noon. The watchman, stumping by, stopped to remark that they said a bunch of niggers was driving in from down the river. If they were they would come straight by our house. . . . A faint unreasoning stir of mob fear communicated itself to us. Right past our house. . . . What if . . .?

For a few minutes we waited for the sound of approaching cars. Then the new tension relaxed into uneasy inaction again. The heavy air was soaked with the scent of honeysuckle, as extravagant and lavishly unreal as the gunfire. We had been in this prairie country a year. It proved always surprising. An acrid under-hint of burned powder began to cut through the perfume of the flowers.

Along about three o'clock the blacks

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had pretty well gone to earth. Hiding out, the watchman said as he passed again. He flashed his torch under bushes and porches. So the shooting was not so plentiful. Just singles, as it were, compared to the great coveys of game put up by the beaters earlier in the evening. Mostly fresh niggers who didn't have sense enough to realize that if you were black you'd better get to hell out of there that night.

If our choice of reported profanity seems monotonous we can answer that so is a mob's. Or else unprintable.

One "single" was a doctor. The best colored doctor in the Southwest, it was said. He came out on the steps of his house with a white handkerchief tied on his arm, and his hands over his head. His wife was by his side. "Don't shoot me, boys. I'm a doctor!"

Oh, yeah?

He was riddled with bullets where he fell. His wife went mad—suddenly and completely—there on the steps. The accommodations for insane Negresses are not very good in the South.

Five or six of the mob rushed into an isolated garage. "Any niggers in here?" There was a boy in the back washing a car. "Just me, boss," he said, and came out quickly. One shot through the head got him.

Just as the sky began to show faint gray in the east the shooting took on a new, barking authority. Distant. Intermittent staccato. There is a hill which overlooks low streets filled with Negro cabins. For some time that hill was pointed out as having been the position of a machine-gun which raked down into those narrow alleys. . . . But there were so many rumors. . . . And that was one which an ultimately sobered town quite understandably did not choose to believe.

At dawn, as we said, the whole of nigger town was burning. A sight you don't often witness, that. One half of a fair-sized town flaming against the pale horizon with a curiously peaceful effect, since no one was doing anything to put it out. The shooting had almost died out, for lack of anything to shoot at. The niggers were lying very low by now. But you still heard it now and then. Pop! Pop! Pop-pop-pop-pop-pop! The morning air had a strange hush, which gave the occasional shots more significance than the steady bombardment of the night had had.

Nobody knew just what to do. Nobody had known since the evening before.

Out in our kitchen, Mally, who had been a grown girl before emancipation, went about getting breakfast. Her face was an expressionless black mask. At the first news of the trouble she had said, "Lord Jesus! That's our wild young men!" Since then she had said nothing. No one talked much. And then —clamorously—the telephone rang and brought the riot straight into our living-room. The call was for Mally. The gnarled old hand with which she held the receiver trembled visibly.

"Yes. . . . Fanny? . . . Oh, Fanny! . . . Oh, *no!* . . . Oh! . . . Oh, Fanny! . . . Hello? . . . Fanny? . . . Hello? . . ."

Fanny was our laundress. She lived over in nigger town with an ancient uncle who had been messenger in a bank for twenty years. They knew there was trouble, of course. But their house was on the edge of things, and the mob had missed them so far. Uncle Zak had never been late to the bank. And he trusted white folks. He thought maybe if he put on his uniform and they saw it. . . . He put it on, and started out to work. Some one shot him at the corner. Fanny could see him lying there. She didn't dare go out to get him, the mob was so close. She called Mally. . . . But while she was talking they broke in and tore the

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telephone out of her hands. . . . We were as powerless to reach her as though she had called from San Francisco.

Breakfast, served by a silent Mally, was somehow an awkward meal.

We found Fanny the next day, all right. They didn't shoot many women.

Cars began to drive slowly along our street. Cars driven by the sort of men who wear their caps backward, the visors down their necks. Probably not to interfere with their rifle gaze. "Any niggers in these houses?" they would shout. The gaping children were called in hastily from the curbs. It didn't seem a very educational sight. Nor a very safe one. After the first car or so people sent their servants down in the cellar, or up in the attic. And waited.

Nobody knew just what to do.

Around eight o'clock the train came in with the militia. Riot call. They detrained and marched up the street in splendid military form. They made preparations for breakfast. One citizen who had served with the Marines in Haiti got a little impatient then. He was from Maine, and had a feeling that the militia could cut their breakfast a trifle short. He searched out the commander and said as much. If they'd give him a squad of men he'd go over and stop this thing. Didn't the militia realize that shooting and looting were still going on? People were being robbed and killed while they were getting ready to have their coffee.

The commandant had him jailed. Martial law. Something was said about nigger lovers. He was bailed out later in the day.

Finally, having eaten, the troops got into nigger town and stopped the shooting. It had more or less stopped itself by then. The shooters had been out all night, and were sort of tired. There was still some desultory sniping, though. One man stood on a down-town corner and got his sight on the stair windows of an office building. The colored janitor was walking up those stairs. When he appeared at the fourth floor window a very neat shot picked him off.

For weeks you heard that So-and-so had a certain number of notches on his gun. And then that some one else had more. But it was hard to check up on the boasters. Just as it was hard to check up on the casualties.

Lots of Negroes never turned up at their homes or their jobs again. Some of them probably simply kept going, once they were out of town that night. And others . . .

There was the son of a cook in our street, for example. Around nine o'clock the man he worked for came and asked for Hatty. He was in a car, with some other men. It seemed that the boy, like Fanny's uncle, thought he ought to get to his job. Before he knew it he had been caught in the fighting around the railroad tracks, and crawled under a freight car to hide. Some one went in after him, and shot him with a pistol. Now that things were quieting down a little he was lying in the town-hall, where the militia were assembling the blacks. But his employer was afraid he wouldn't live many hours. If Hatty wanted to see the boy he would take her down, and look out for her. But she was afraid to go. You couldn't blame her, really. Some of the house Negroes who had allowed themselves to be put in those wandering cars and escorted to the safety of the town-hall had been shot at as they drove through the streets. It wasn't a ride an old woman wanted to undertake, even to see her boy alive. The boy's boss understood. He went back himself, and got a doctor, and stayed with the boy till he died.

But that night when he went to get the body for Hatty it was gone. He was an influential man, the boy's boss, and

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he had every coffin in the town opened, looking for that boy. He never found him. It seemed that some time in the afternoon some men came to the town-hall with a truck, saying they were from an undertaker. They took off a dozen or so corpses. And no one ever saw them again. Colored people share with whites the sentimentality of liking to know where their dead are buried.

But nobody knew what to do about it.

Either because the militia was efficient or because the game was played out after such a very active night, things were fairly peaceful by afternoon. Most of the black population was herded in the town-hall. It was easier to protect them there. But there had been difficulties in getting them concentrated. The look of the men who were escorting the blacks to the town-hall hadn't inspired confidence. Housewife after housewife refused to surrender servants to their dubious protection. Several small dramas took place in our street, when a woman with three or four terrified Negroes in her kitchen declined entrance to those amateur deputies with shotguns. Belief in the law had not been strengthened in the town during the last eighteen hours.

The Red Cross came down, and the fair-grounds were equipped with hundreds of temporary beds, to shelter the homeless. The homeless were marched five miles through the dust and heat to reach that haven. It was hard on the women and small children, because the food problem hadn't yet been met, and most of them hadn't had anything to eat. The thermometer was 102. It wouldn't have been an easy day to face, even on a full stomach.

On the second day any black whose employer would vouch for him or her was released, wearing a yellow arm-band. The arm-band was to indicate that the wearer was harmless. No attempt was made, of course, to indicate which members of the mob had now returned to sanity.

Those yellow-banded people wandered dazed and disconsolate through the still smoking ruins of nigger town, subdued to apathy. Twisted iron and cinders marked their homes. Broken trunks and bureaus, caked with sodden ashes, gaped empty as the looters had left them. With the help of the Red Cross an attempt was made to reunite scattered families. Largely, one might state, with the sole help of the Red Cross. Except for its professional services only ten white women worked at the relief station. One of them was staying at a hotel in the town, and three of them were district nurses anyway. Maybe those who didn't volunteer were wise. It was depressing at the relief station.

There was the problem of scattered families, missing children, fathers, mothers. Of trying to coax the fugitives back in from their retreats. Airplanes would locate a little huddled group off in the country a mile or so. But when they sent cars after them the groups would melt away, running like rabbits. White men in cars didn't strike them as healthy contacts.

And then there was the matter of funerals. Complicated by that "undertaker's" wagon.

And there was the problem of getting those houses rebuilt. The Red Cross took voluminous depositions of losses. But wherever those depositions were filed they probably still remain. Almost no houses were insured. Blacks are bad riot risks. The whole affair drifted into comfortable oblivion surprisingly soon. At least on the white side of the tracks. What Mally's "wild young men" thought we do not know.

Eventually, of course, houses did struggle up out of the ashes, and the black people repossessed their part of the town. Most of them had jobs they could

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go on with. House or no house, missing family or not, you can still cook or wash, or dig, or drive mules.

But there were a few who didn't pick up the threads so easily. One gray-haired Negro doctor who worked tirelessly at the Red Cross centre said, courteously, that there was no use his taking up their time filling out a list of his losses. It was, he said, the second time he had been burned out. The first time, in another State, he had lost his house, his instruments, his horse and buggy. He was younger then, and had begun again. This time he had lost his brick house and office, his drugstore, his equipment, his operating table, his automobile, his new instruments, and his daughter's half-paid-for piano. He didn't, he said, think he would try again.

Things like that made for indignant talk for a few months, among certain people. Those same people thought that the photographs of riot victims in the more dramatic poses of violent death, enterprisingly printed on post-cards, and sold surreptitiously, in the manner of naughty postals in Paris, were not very nice. The opinion that a race riot now and then kept the niggers in their place was hotly contested.

But even that talk finally died down. No one really knew what to do about such things.

Drummer's Rest

By EDWARD HILTS

THERE are recurring periods in my life as a travelling salesman when submission to the formalities and monotonies of city hotels no longer seems possible. As my travels take me closer and closer to the Piedmont region bordering the southern Appalachians, I always feel a rebellion mounting within me. At such times I gaze restlessly from the window of my hotel room, over the chimney pots of a dingy city, and into the distance, where, if the day be clear, I see a hazy blue-tinted and almost cloudlike bank lying just above the horizon indicating a range of mountains—the Blue Ridge where it mingles with the mighty Smokies.

I chafe at the dismal prospect of a lonely week-end in this chain hotel. I turn from the window to look at my stereotyped room, reminiscent of hundreds of other hotel rooms scattered over my territory from Dallas to Richmond, its stamped metal furniture, disguised as mahogany, cold and clammy to the touch, and noisily protesting use.

The gilded hotel lobby, imitation palm trees, and leatherette lounging chairs, the milling crowds and their mingled odors of stale tobacco smoke and cosmetics arouse disgust. I think of gloomy coffee-shop breakfasts, and dinners accompanied by the din of radio grand opera. I tire of simulated ease and luxury, correct appointments, and faultless service. Finally, I rebel at the lordly ways of the grandiose room clerk, before whom I cringe in shame when forced

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to admit that I cannot afford to pay six dollars a day for lodging.

There is always a last straw. Frequently it is an incident of little importance, but it effectively breaks the back of my endurance. Perhaps I simply stumble over the loose corner of a rug and a ripple of laughter comes from the uniformed gentry of the porter's bench. I command my baggage, my car, my bill, and refuse to pay for the ginger ale and cigarettes, not of my ordering, listed thereon. I silently call down anathema upon the entire place, throw my grips into the waiting automobile, distribute tips and drive, drive, drive as if pursued by demons.

On and on I speed toward that blue haze that is becoming a great green shadow ahead of me. My hands, my feet grow numb from the keen cold of this January day. My spirits rise as the motor roars and the car begins to point its nose toward the sky. Another hour, the foothills are left behind; I begin a steady climb, the road turning and twisting. The rising wind brings fitful flurries of snow from a dead gray sky, miniature waterfalls hang in great icicles from the heights of gray-green cliffs. Instead of the yellow pine, sweet gum, and tulip trees of the lowlands, I now see the deep, dark forests of balsam fir, hemlock, and white pine, native to the higher altitudes. The thinly scattered laurel has become thick mats of green on the steep slopes, thickets of rhododendron line the ice-incrusted streams.

I have crossed the boundary into North Carolina. For an hour there have been no signs of habitation except a deserted ranger camp, nor have I passed other travellers on the road. A lonely spot, this sombre mountain, its upper reaches now obscured in lowering fog. The darkening coves, the rising gale, moaning and whipping through the overhanging evergreen boughs, add to the sense of isolation. I glance anxiously at the fuel gauge. I scan the steep road ahead for signs of fallen timber or obstructing slides of earth and rock. Delay in this lonely spot would not be pleasant.

At last I have reached the summit—I am through the gap and down into the plateau beyond; I whistle, I break into song—a song that I learned from my grandmother, "The b'ar went over the mounting." I pass through a small settlement and note its general store; I waver, I am hungry, the keen mountain air has done that. But, no! A healthy appetite is a sacred thing to-day; to dull its edge with sweet cakes and candy would be a wanton act. I push on, my course hastened by the lengthening shadows and the scattered flakes of falling snow.

From out of the blackness of an early nightfall and a blinding snowstorm I feel my way into the village of Murphy, a Carolina mountain town. I stop before a broad flat-topped rock, intended for use as a stepping-stone, upon which are engraved in foot-high letters the words, "Drummer's Rest."

The building before me is a rambling weatherboarded affair, built in the shape of a large U, enclosing a flagpaved yard on three sides and opening on the unpaved street. Deep porches and their overhanging balconies, studded with doors and light-filled windows, line the snow-covered court.

I am greeted by the booming voice of a figure approaching from within the yard.

"Howdy there, howdy, stranger, am shore glad to see you again! Now just run along into the house, and I'll take care of everything."

It's Avery, a giant in broad-brimmed hat and heavy boots. For thirty years the man of all work at Drummer's Rest—greeter, baggage man, commissary, and assistant manager—his "howdy there,

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howdy, stranger," has been music to hundreds of mountain travellers.

Years before, Avery, sensing my need of supervision to prevent my falling into unworthy hands, took me into his charge. I had just alighted for the first time from the weather-beaten passenger coach hooked to the rear of the daily freight train which wanders into this mountain valley. I was preparing to give my baggage to the porter from a rival hotel when I was confronted by the giant. In one hand he carried a large ham, and from the other dangled several chickens.

"What do you think I'm buyin' these things fer, young feller?" he asked indignantly.

I admitted my ignorance, venturing that they would undoubtedly be eaten by some one.

"Well," thundered the offended Avery, "after I've gone to all the trouble of climbin' up and down these hills after hams, chickens 'n things fer you fellers, how come I've got to drag you up and make you eat?"

Without more ado he motioned to the darkey boy who accompanied him to pick up my baggage. Avery then firmly led the way up the road from the little railroad station by the river to Drummer's Rest on the hill.

II

The arrival of guests at Drummer's Rest is always the signal for a great stir and bustle of activity which accentuates the welcome. To-night, as I once again assume the rôle of an important and honored guest, the place resounds with the noise of slamming doors, running feet, excited voices, and orders being given. Somehow, without being in the least like the pictures, Drummer's Rest brings to mind an old tavern, the arriving coach, champing horses with steaming flanks, and the swinging lanterns of the running servants and stable boys.

I make my way through the courtyard, on legs partially paralyzed by the cold, escorted by Avery and followed by a flock of jabbering darkey boys with my grips. The trunk of a giant tulip tree becomes visible; growing from the middle of the enclosure, its spreading branches reach out over the surrounding roofs. Outlined against the darker background of the deep porches are the snow-covered cages of a miniature zoo. Two great owls chatter and grumble in a large wire-covered box, several boomer squirrels are bedded down in a smaller enclosure, while ground hogs, rabbits, and a pair of young bobcats have quarters close by. I miss from their summer home, Tom and Jerry, the two large Asiatic monkeys, now in warmer winter quarters in the rear.

The broad door at the end of the yard is opened by Avery, and I enter with a flourish followed by my retinue of darkeys. The large quadrangle of a room is flanked on one side by a stone fireplace in which a hickory log, as thick as the body of a man, glows and splutters; on the other, by a desk on which lies a large register book, very much dog-eared from long usage. A number of splint-bottomed rockers and straight chairs are scattered about; several stout oak writing-tables line the wall. The floor, made of rough boards, is bare and deeply scarred by generations of heavy-shod feet, the walls and ceilings are stained and marked with age. The only compromise in the rough severity of the furnishings is the well-worn leather-upholstered couch, standing half-hidden in a far corner, as if apologetic of its uncouth companions.

An eagle, with savage glare, surveys the room from above the desk, squirrels peek at us from unexpected places; an

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owl, the heads of two large bucks and a panther occupy convenient spaces, to say nothing of alligator and reptile skins. On the wall are hung frames containing letters from prominent people including a president of the United States, governors, judges, and many lesser lights. Wherever space permits, mementoes of every description are displayed. There are mineral samples and semi-precious stones from near-by mines, relics of Indian art and warfare, and examples of mountain handicraft.

The chairs nearest the fire are occupied by a dozen or more men in various styles of dress, correctly tailored business suits, corduroys, khakis, flannels, and hob-nail logger's boots. At the writing-tables are seated several salesmen engaged in writing up reports and orders to home offices. Not the slick, jolly-looking fellows who frequent the hotels of the larger towns, but more grave, perhaps a little weather-beaten, certainly more roughly dressed, with traces of dust and splashes of mud, for the life of the mountain drummer is hard.

An exotic note is struck by a number of Persian cats gracefully stretched out on the floor in total disregard of closely treading feet. They seem to be forever sleeping, excepting at such times as one rises to stroll to a more comfortable spot, there to resume its slumbers. A cage of parrakeets hangs from a hook on the wall, while a large green-and-yellow parrot drowses on a perch by the fire. Polly is at her best in the early morning, when from six-thirty until seven o'clock she screams in shrill tones, audible throughout the house: "Up, up, everybody up!"

My entry and approach to the centre of the room, where I am to register, have now adopted a very formal air. Avery respectfully removes his hat, mounts a pair of ancient steel-rimmed spectacles on his nose and, with considerable dignity, steps to a position behind the desk. The darkey boys, now very quiet, stand in readiness to pounce on my baggage. As I write my name on the book, I hear a slow voice from the rear and left of the desk:

"Glad to have you with us again, young man, just make yourself at home around here."

I go around to shake hands with Aunt Nettie Dickey. She is seated in a capacious chair, a vantage point from which she can command a view of the entire room, courtyard and street. She drops the sweater on which she is knitting to give me her hand.

"Avery, give the young man number ten, that's the one he always likes."

Everybody under fifty is "young man" to Aunt Nettie. Sole owner and proprietor of this mountain inn, she rules it with a strong hand. She sits now like an Eastern potentate, a chain of amethysts from her native mountains glowing around her plump neck and cascading into her lap. Her love for bright colors and rich materials takes form to-night in a voluminous dress of heavy garnet satin which, strange to say, is not incongruous.

To reach number ten, I must pass again to the open porches and by outside stairs mount to the balcony. Each guest-room has separate egress to the wide verandas, and to the chill air of the courtyard. Many of the doors stand open, for the native of Appalachia has a distrust of closed doors and a preference for his natural element, the air of the highlands.

Number ten isn't luxurious. A thick hand-woven carpet covers the floor, a big bed is piled high with patchwork comfortables. Its other furniture is old and not far from dilapidation, the fixtures in the adjoining bath are antiquated and worn. A bowl and pitcher of water stand on a table in the corner for

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no other known reason than a native scepticism about plumbing and an effort to accommodate guests not familiar with its uses. A small fireplace, with its scarred mantel, still does service in the early hours of the cold winter mornings. Jake, the porter, his black face serious with responsibility, shows me into the room with the air of a major-domo ushering me into a palatial chamber.

III

I am always startled by the sudden harsh, metallic clang! clang! clang! which penetrates every room in the house and is heard from the courthouse to the river bridge. "First-time" guests often jump from their chairs to look wildly for the cause of this unearthly sound. Particularly nervous persons, believing the building to be on fire, have been known to leap from their rooms to the balconies minus essential wearing apparel. However, fears are always quickly allayed by the long plaintive cry: "Sup-p-e-r-r-r." The alarming noise is caused by the rapid beating of a heavy iron hoop suspended in the courtyard, the established method of announcing meals at Drummer's Rest.

The scraping of chairs, shuffling of feet, and slamming of doors instantly follow the call. Newspapers are thrown aside half-read, card games are broken up, sentences are left unfinished as all converge toward the dining-room door.

The room has a low ceiling but gives the impression of being quite spacious. Delicate china and old-fashioned silver service, presents from admiring friends, look down from glass cases, in comic contrast to the heavy dishes of every-day use. The tables are of varying sizes—all crowded to the limit with platters, bowls, and plates filled with food. A tempting sight, sufficient to inspire the pen of a Brillât-Savarin and certainly one on which I have dwelt repeatedly during the lean periods of my travels.

Aunt Nettie may be said to operate on the American plan. But that is scarcely an adequate classification. American plan usually means that one pays a fixed price for a meal and receives, in return, many small dishes resembling bird baths, each of which contains a tiny portion of food. Aunt Nettie's system really has no counterpart and is best designated after the mountain fashion—"fifty cents a throw and no holts barred."

Standing by the tables are several white-coated waiters. I take care to obtain a seat at a table attended by a colored man whose seamed and wrinkled face is surmounted by a shiny bald pate edged with a fringe of white wool. This is old Charley, who conceives it his duty not only to see that those seated at his table want for nothing but also to urge his charges on to greater gastronomic exertions.

I, being in Charley's good graces, get first choice of an incredibly large platter of turkey followed by stuffing, topped off with giblet sauce. This isn't Thanksgiving, neither is it Christmas, just an ordinary Saturday-night supper at Drummer's Rest. In addition to the turkey, there are cold roast beef and baked country ham—rose-colored slices delicately bordered with white.

A word of explanation is necessary lest it be thought that I refer to that ordinary product of barnyard swine, commonly accepted as country ham. Not at all! The ham of which I speak is cut from the thin, bristly flanks of those long-snouted pigs, lean of body and limb and as fleet of foot as deer, which range the mountainsides in a semi-wild state. They may receive a scanty ration of corn at certain seasons of the year, but in the main they forage the steep wooded slopes for roots and acorns. The ham from these animals is salt-cured

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and rubbed in ashes—emerging from the process rock hard and with a nutty, half-wild flavor which is never found in its over-fattened, completely domesticated brother.

To continue the porcine interlude—another of Aunt Nettie's specialties is turnip greens with smoked jowls. To complete this dish it is necessary to add baked Georgia yams—piping hot from the oven—to be eaten right from their golden-brown jackets.

And who can forget the baked apples capped with melted butter and sprinkled with cinnamon, or that other delicacy, the little brown sickle pears preserved in their own melting sweetness? However, our favorites, among all the preserves to be found on Aunt Nettie's table, are water-melon rind and the spicy sugar fig.

To-night there are devilled eggs, potato salad, and grape-leaf pickles, to say nothing of chow-chow relish. And must I pass the sweet-potato pie, creamy custard in a crisp crust, which Charley places at my side despite my mild protests?

My attention is drawn to my neighbor on the right, a tall splinter of a man, who gulps cup after cup of strong black coffee. It's the Reverend Wick, just returned from a "baptizin' " up on Shootin' Creek, or the Pizen Cove district. I picture this stalwart circuit-rider standing waist-deep in the ice-cold water of some swift mountain stream, his attentive audience shivering on the snow-covered banks. My revery is interrupted by Charley's squeaky voice at my elbow:

"Boss, I 'se positive yo' would enjoy some of dis heah cracklin' cawn bread wid some crabapple jelly—an' Mistah Ed, if yo' will put some of dis butter on some o' dem bakin'-powder biscuits an' top it wid dis sourwood honey you'll sho find it good."

Crackling corn bread and crabapple jelly, or that other combination I love so well, consisting of over-sized baking-powder biscuits, covered with rich butter and thick layers of sourwood honey in the comb. To mention their inspired flavors, in connection with yellow-flaked buttermilk, is to bring tears of sorrow to the eyes of those unhappy exiles who know its joys no more.

Sourwood honey, amber-colored nectar of the southern Appalachians, is the queen of honeys, whose exquisite taste puts all others to shame, whose delicate comb melts in the mouth, whose aroma is like the scented breath of a mountain valley on a warm June day.

I often joke with old Charley about his experience with the travelling man and the honey. This salesman, a frequent guest at Drummer's Rest, on one occasion brought his wife along. Noting the absence of the honey bowl from its usual position in the centre of the table, he called to Charley:

"Charley, where is my honey this time?"

"Lord, boss," chuckled Charley, "that lady left heah the day after yo' did an' ain't been back since, no, suh, she shore ain't."

Conversation never lags—Aunt Nettie sees to that, as she passes from table to table. The hum of pleasant discourse follows her motherly figure. At one table, two salesmen, a circuit-court judge, a mining man, a lumber buyer, and a clergyman are eating in silence as if preferring their own thoughts. Aunt Nettie pats the judge on the back and calls him "my boy," introduces them, one to another, and they become so deeply interested in conversation that they retire from the dining-room in a body and are inseparable for the rest of the evening.

Between her frequent tours among her seated guests, Aunt Nettie sits at the head of her own private board. This

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long table is always filled with relatives, friends, and visitors, who listen to her philosophizing and indulgent scolding.

Her duties are a bit more strenuous just now, for this is court week, which explains the presence of the judge, several lawyers, and others having legal business. Besides these, there are the usual number of salesmen, mining men, cattle buyers, lumbermen, and the engineers from a near-by water-power project. Drummer's Rest stands at a half-way point between the lowland country and the vast mountain region lying to the north, hence the varied character of its guests.

IV

Back again with the wildcat, the eagle, and the owl, I prepare to spend a pleasant evening among congenial associates. The cracking detonation of matches is followed by rising clouds of smoke. Large hunks are bitten from black plugs as the chewers seek the proximity of the brass cuspidors, though, truth to tell, distance is no great hindrance to these expert marksmen. Card games begin to form, wags tell jokes to the tune of snorts and guffaws of laughter.

I take my seat before the spluttering fire, where I listen to an enthusiastic traveller explaining that this is his first trip here in forty years. To use his words, "hit ain't changed a hair in forty year, except that there be more o' them dudads on the wall, and I don't remember seein' them long-haired cats here then. Now the old missus, she ain't changed a bit neither, just as spry as——"

The discourse is cut short by the entry of four roughly dressed serious-looking fellows. Three of them carry musical instruments in their hands—a violin, a banjo, and a guitar. The fourth produces a French harp from his pocket. They take their places, a line of chairs along the wall, where stiffly and self-consciously they tune up. Then follows one lively air after another, not jazz nor tin-pan alley, but tunes which have held to life in the fastnesses of the Blue Ridge, the Smokies, and the Cumberlands for generations. The themes of these airs, once heard in the halls of Saxon Thanes and by the campfires of the Scottish Clans, are now nearly forgotten by all but these troubadours of the Southern highlands.

A grave-looking chap dressed in knee boots and a checkered mackinaw has been busily occupied at a writing-table during the evening. Watching him closely I see him write vigorously for a few minutes, discard what he has written, chew the end of his penny pencil, look vacantly into space, until seemingly stirred to write again. Undoubtedly, I decide, this person is engaged in a deep calculation or perhaps he is writing an important document.

Suddenly, during an intermission in the music, I notice his face light with satisfaction as he picks several pieces of paper from the table. Standing up, he motions for silence. I lean forward to catch his words, for I recognize this uncouth fellow for what he really is, a highland poet, a composer of ballads. A literal descendant of ancient Celtic minstrels, this Appalachian bard still keeps alive, in crude verse, all-but-forgotten deeds of valor and composes new lines to fit the daily life around him.

He reads with a surprising lack of self-consciousness the lines he has been so busily creating, of a "lady" he had seen to-day—"the lady who smiled at him with her eyes." Urged by his audience to sing, he speaks to the guitar player: "Jeff, let's have 'Sourwood Mountain,' right soft like." In a rich voice he drifts from song to song, log-cabin romance or snatches from ballads of the days of lance and longbow.

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The evening half gone, two colored boys burst into the room, one carrying a tray of cups and saucers; the other deftly handling a coffee pot. The scene takes on new life; the fire is poked, its glowing heat driving back the encircling ring of chairs. The musicians, now warmed in both body and spirit, are pouring their very souls into their plaintive tunes. I lie back in my chair and let the warmth from the blazing embers pleasantly toast my shins and bring the tingling blood to my face; my mind is at ease and my contentment is supreme.

The time passes swiftly, the clock strikes eleven; I look at my watch—it indicates twelve. Guests can never be quite certain of the time at Drummer's Rest, for it sits astride the line dividing Eastern from Central time. Some refer to Eastern time, some to Central time, and, in the summer, there are those who speak of Eastern or Central daylight saving time. Elections are won and lost, long-standing friendships are broken, all over the question of time. The only unchanging time is indicated by the clock in the railroad station, thus, to be sure of appointments one must go by railroad time.

However, let the time of the outside world be what it may, midnight, by the big lobby clock, must see me on my way to bed lest I come under Aunt Nettie's displeasure by arriving late for the seven-o'clock breakfast.

The thought of breakfast brings to mind the experience of a friend of mine who lives in a Northern city. One summer we arranged to spend our vacation together. He was to drive down and meet me in Murphy. It so happened that he arrived several hours before I did, and he greeted me with a very doubtful look. He alleged that the place looked like a barn to him. He also stated that due to a sudden press of business he would be forced to start home the following day.

My friend ate his supper that night without comment, but with apparently an added interest in the place. After a cool, restful night he appeared for breakfast with the remark that he was hungry. His eyes bulged with amazement at the sight of the table, but, being a sportsman, he was completely won over when Charley placed a platter before him on which lay an even dozen speckled trout freshly caught from a near-by stream, fried crisp brown in corn meal. My friend decided to stay a day longer. It may have been the fishing that caused him to linger on when I was forced to leave two weeks later.

And so to bed, knowing that soon enough I shall hear old Charley as he rustles around on my hearth with his basket of fat pine splinters for my fire. He will be anxious that I be on time for breakfast and I know just about what method he will use to arouse me.

"Mornin', boss," he will pipe, "scuse me, boss, but we shore got a powerful fine breakfas' dis mornin'. We got fried chicken 'n roe herrin', ham an' mos' any kind of aigs. Y'ssir, and we got waffles 'n hot cakes wid sorgum syrup er ham gravy, an' dey's plenty of hot biscuits, taters an' all dat sort of thing. An', boss, if yo' wants a cup o' strong coffee to wake yo' up, I'd shore love to bring hit right up."

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Is New York American?

By EARL SPARLING

Where did all these New Yorkers come from? This city which is the object of hatred or the goal of desire for many people—is it foreign or is it the most American in the United States? Mr. Sparling has investigated for us the origins of the people who make New York what it is.

"New York," so the wording goes out in the grassroots, "is too filled with foreigners. It's a nice place for a visit, but I wouldn't live there on a bet."

One night in the Grand Central subway station I came upon a lanky young Nebraskan. He was bibulous and proud. He was informing an awed, silent, rush-hour multitude as follows: "You saps think this is a town. You think this is America. I'm from Nebraska, and out in my country you couldn't get to first base." I must add that in the fifteen minutes I listened he drew no challenges.

And I recall Bishop James Cannon's variation. Confronted with evidence of New York's increasing wetness, the Southern prelate, executive spokesman for the Anti-Saloon League, declared with a great finality, "That does not make America, gentlemen."

Nor is that attitude confined to the far and deep regions. Last January in Philadelphia, two hours from Manhattan, a broker willed one hundred twenty thousand dollars annually to his widow on condition that she remain in America eight months out of every year, and he stipulated, on his death-bed, that "residence in the city of New York shall not be regarded as residing in the United States."

And in May, J. Elmer Morgan, of Washington, D. C., chairman of the National Advisory Council Committee on Education by Radio, stood in New York before a notable gathering of university presidents, deans, and professors and informed them that "New Yorkism is more dangerous to America than Communism." There was no dissenting voice.

Now I am no defender of New York nor of the counting-room civilization that spawned it. As a Southwesterner I find it an appalling place, rich for making money, poor for living. I despise its graft, its crime, its dirt, its accents, its utilitarian ugliness, its opportunistic cheapness, its parvenu swank, its swelling army of epicenes—even its philosophy of toleration, which is less a virtue than a confession of weakness, a lack of a way of life.

But all of that is one thing. It is a different thing to shrug the whole spectacle away as something completely alien and not American. America cannot be absolved that easily. Not only is New York American, but it is the mirror in which America, after half a century of confusion, suddenly sees herself for what she is.

There is probably not one character-

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istic industry in New York, nor any function of megalopolitan life, in which Southerners and Westerners have not achieved eminence.

New York, first of all, means skyscrapers—thanks to the West. Acromania began in Minnesota, where L. S. Buffington, a Blake turned architect, dreamed fantasies in the air in 1880, and in Chicago, where more practical men made the dream a reality in 1884. "The Skyscraper was possible in Chicago," reflects Colonel William A. Starrett, master-builder in New York, in his book "Skyscrapers," "because Chicago was young and bold and short on precedent. Only after it had been tried and proved in the Western city—and then only hesitatingly—did the New York Building Department approve plans for the steel-skeleton Tower Building on lower Broadway in 1889."

It was the Flatiron Building, fifteen years later, that first centred the nation's eyes on the dirty Manhattan sky. It was built by Daniel H. Burnham, who had pioneered steel in Chicago; and outlanders have had a lien on the skyline ever since, have led in the struggle to make ugly brownstone New York beautiful according to the only standard an industrial plutocracy can comprehend.

The Woolworth Building, designed by Cass Gilbert, who was born in Zanesville, Ohio, soared upward in 1916, a revelation to the world of what was really brewing in New York. Not until 1930 was that archetype of American architecture cast in the shade. When finally its Gothic peak could be looked down upon, Western men shared in the achievement. In what was literally a battle to possess the sky, changing their plans overnight, producing secret steel spires from nowhere and heaving them into place, hesitating at the eighty-sixth floor only long enough to announce sixteen additional floors, the outlanders erected three buildings within a year each higher than the other, each higher than the airy pile on lower Broadway that had monopolized the sooty heavens so lucratively for fifteen years.

In the chromium-plated observation tower of the building that bears his name Walter P. Chrysler placed a box of machinist's tools, the gesture of a man who was born in Waumega, Kans., and who spent all of his youth in the West. He had used those tools when he was earning his living with his hands in the West. He had hoped to exhibit them in the highest building in New York. But ascending his steel tower to gaze forth on the city that evolved that testament of self-conscious inferiority, the Social Register, the tourist must look upward at the Empire State Building, which rises one hundred two stories where the old Waldorf Astoria graced Fifth Avenue. The Starrett brothers, from Kansas, built the Empire State; also the Bank of Manhattan Building, which shadows Wall Street and is only slightly lower than the Chrysler spire.

There were five Starretts once; three now: Paul, William, and Ralph. Sons of a preacher in Lawrence, Kans., they arrived in New York at the turn of the century. The eldest, Theodore, was pupil to Daniel Burnham when "Uncle Dan" was building the Rookery Building in Chicago in 1884, the world's second skyscraper. Nearly all the brothers studied at some time or another under "Uncle Dan" Burnham, who was born in New England but who "alighted in Chicago (about 1869) from a cattle train from the West," and under his partner, John W. Root, son of a Georgia blockade-runner.

"Make no little plans," Daniel Burnham taught them. "They have no magic to stir men's souls." The brothers followed instructions. They became the greatest skyscraper builders in the world.

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They built the Pennsylvania Railway Station, and the Plaza, Commodore and Biltmore hotels. They built the New York Life Insurance Building (architect, Cass Gilbert), which sinks six levels beneath the earth, covers an entire city block, in some ways the most remarkable structure in Manhattan. They used thirty-five subcontractors and three thousand, five hundred workers to build the Empire State, highest man-made thing in the world, three hundred feet higher than the Eifel Tower, two hundred feet higher than the Chrysler spire, so vast that its eighty-sixth floor could house a ballroom dance. They have built as men never built before, but observe their Western inheritance. They have officed for years on the thirteenth floor of one of their most obscure structures, 101 Park Avenue. They work in bare, thin-carpeted offices, equipped with old-fashioned upright desks. The walls are decorated not with costly paintings and etchings but with photographs of friends and relatives, including the photograph of their mother.

Plain men; in short, adhering to pioneer virtues. Their father built his own church and his own home out in Kansas. They still have that in them. So solid are they, so pragmatic and behavioristic, so American, that it didn't occur to any of them until it was almost too late to go back to Lawrence to inspect the home they had played in. It was a dilapidated tenement when Colonel Starrett finally thought of it, with creaking steps and broken windows. But one hand-worked transom, inscribed by his father's own hand, now decorates the son's home in New Jersey.

Uncle Dan Burnham's partner was a man from Georgia. The Starrett brothers' partner is a man from Maryland, Andrew J. Eken. When the Starretts built the Commodore and Biltmore hotels, flanking the Grand Central Railroad Station, they built according to plans laid down by Reed & Stem, St. Paul, Minn., architects. Facing the problem of building the greatest railroad station in the world, the New York Central Railroad turned not to New York but to Minnesota, where Buffington had dreamed of fantastic steel miracles when New York was still building red stone fronts. The railroad turned to St. Paul because its chief engineer was from Minnesota.

The Grand Central complex of buildings is New York's prelude to the future. Trains rumble on double-deck tracks down in the bowels of the city. Subways cross laterally, so deep down that water drips from the walls. Above, surface traffic crisscrosses on two-storied streets, dives into the heart of the New York Central Building, emerges and sweeps at a rooftop level through a towering maze of stone and steel. And all of this is pure hinterland, conceived and for the most part built by men from the broadlands.

New York means subways, the problem of getting people to and from the skyline. And the chairman of the board for both subway systems, the B. M. T. and the I. R. T., is Gerhard M. Dahl, who was born in Fort Howard, Wis., population three thousand. Watch him work, this Westerner who also is a minister's son, and who looks as much like a cattleman as an industrialist. The prize is the most concentrated transportation business in history.

Elected chairman of the B. M. T. in 1924, Dahl entered the tangled subway situation after decades of public-utility feudalism, summed up by that peculiar phrase "recapture of property." It was necessary, every one agreed, to unify the two rival systems, but under the law the only unification possible was city ownership. The law prohibited either the

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B. M. T. or the I. R. T. from owning more than ten per cent of the other. Thus it was necessary for the city to recapture transit properties it had surrendered to corporations in a freer age. And thus the whole thing developed into a struggle by the capitalists to obtain a satisfactory price.

Dahl was virtually unknown when he took the B. M. T. chairmanship. He had been a New Yorker only ten years, though during that time he had risen to a vice-presidency of the Chase National Bank, largest bank in America. He faced an acute problem. His Morgan and Chase National confrères had no desire to keep the subways unless the five-cent fare could be increased. The courts were unsympathetic and Tammany Hall, by political necessity, was sworn to the traditional nickel. And finally, in its ancient wisdom, Tammany decided to build a new subway system, now being completed, which would take multitudes of packed humanity away from the old lines and which, no matter what the deficit, would be operated on a five-cent basis. That was Tammany's ace in the hole in a three-handed game with two rivals who were prevented by law and natural suspicion from looking at each other's hands.

Jerry Dahl let the I. R. T. stand the brunt and the unpopularity of fighting a futile fight for a higher fare. While the I. R. T. hastened from court to court, he carefully assembled I. R. T. stock. He bought nineteen thousand shares for the B. M. T., near the limit allowed by law. There was no law limiting the amount he and other B. M. T. directors could buy. He bought six thousand shares for himself, through his family investment trust, the Waubesa Corporation, owned by his wife (all New York industrialists have family investment corporations, usually owned by their wives).

Other B. M. T. directors bought. There were handsome flurries in I. R. T. on Wall Street's Big Board. But that was a costly business, buying into a concern whose future, so to speak, was uncertain. In the end it proved unnecessary. Dahl had been elected B. M. T. chairman, so the story went in 1924, because it was hoped his oratorical ability, developed as county attorney in Portage County, Wis., would help in settlement of the problem. It did. In September, 1930, Dahl walked into the annual I. R. T. meeting and voted two hundred twelve thousand, three hundred fifty-four shares of stock, or eighty-eight per cent of the total. He had got a large part of that stock on proxy from I. R. T. stockholders by merely asking for it, by persuading them rhetorically that he was the wizard to lead them out of the wilderness.

And so he sits to-day in his rather bare, country-lawyer offices above the Chase National, undisputed boss, an efficient unification in himself which the city must accept before it can achieve any other kind. The three-handed deal is over. The city must deal with one spokesman now. And the spokesman promises to do well. The unification plan presented to the people by Samuel Untermyer provides that the two subway companies shall be paid four hundred eighty-nine million, eight hundred forty thousand dollars (which according to critics is about one hundred eighty-seven million dollars too much), that the B. M. T. shall operate the three lines for the city, that the directors and stockholders shall receive two hundred thousand dollars a year in addition to operating expenses.

Not so bad for a man who grew up in a three-thousand town and who not so very long ago was very proud indeed when he became county attorney and could move to the metropolis of Stevens

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Point, where ten thousand persons lived. And sitting in his office the other day I asked him, a bit inanely, if he felt completely at home in New York, if he ever felt that New York was an alien place. He laughed and drew a diagram on his desk-blotter, a rough map of old Portage County.

"Up there," he said, pointing to one corner, "the Norwegians lived. When I held a trial up there, I had to hold it in Norwegian. Down in this corner the Hungarians lived. Down there half the testimony had to be translated. I doubt if there was a single European nationality that wasn't represented in that county. There were even native New Yorkers there, as many as you're liable to find in the same number of people here in Manhattan. There was everything in Portage County and it always seemed American to me."

There are other subway men from the hinterland. One of the largest B. M. T. stockholders is Thomas L. Chadbourne, from Houghton, Mich. On the B. M. T. executive committee sits Matthew C. Brush, from Stillwater, Minn. On the I. R. T. board sits Samuel W. Reyburn, from Hot Springs County, Ark. And with Reyburn we enter another phase of the question.

New York means stores, the shopping capital of America. If anywhere one is to find the born megalopolitan, it should be in these haughty temples of fashion, where exquisiteness is a chief requisite for success, where destiny is determined by the tint of a ribbon or the texture of a tweed.

Samuel Reyburn arrived in New York in 1914. He became president of the Associated Dry Goods Corporation, controlling eight stores throughout the country and doing eighty million dollars of business a year, and head until recently of Lord & Taylor's, one of the stores that pioneered the way in making Fifth Avenue a rival of the Rue de la Paix. A broad, amiable, drawling county squire sort of a man, a Senator Joe Robinson turned merchant, he sells fashion with the same aplomb he sold strawberries on the station platform at Malvern, Ark., when he was barefooted and knee high.

The story of Reyburn is the story of many a Southern man, of the South itself. The family was hard pressed when Sam and three other children were growing up. Things had been different before the War Between the States. When Joseph Reyburn, Samuel's father, got back from fighting the Yankees, he found everything gone. His stage-coach business, in the family for three generations, had evaporated. His horses had been seized, his several slaves had been freed. His home was in ruins. Even his three earlier children were dead. Two of them had died within a week of whooping cough behind the Yankee lines. Arkansas, from Hot Springs down to Little Rock, was in the enemy's hands. No medical care was available for children of Confederate soldiers. Joseph Reyburn slipped through the lines to help bury his dead. The mother, driven from her own home, went to live with an aged couple on the next farm. There she heard of her brother's death across the river, and of her brother-in-law's death; and there one morning she went down the road with an old Negro to find her aged host dead in a gully, shot through the back. She helped lift the body into the wagon and helped bury it. That was war, and that was the South when Joseph Reyburn limped home in 1865. It was all to do over again. And now a generation later the Reyburn name again means something, and in an Eastern stronghold, the last place any one would have dreamed.

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There are other examples. The Gimbel family, controlling both the store of that name and Saks & Co., with its lorenzian Fifth Avenue place, were selling goods in Vincennes, Ind., and Milwaukee, Wis., when Fifth Avenue was still a brass-cuspidor street. R. H. Macy's, the largest store in America, is owned by the Strauses. They arrived in New York from Talbotten, Ga. Edwin I. Marks, executive vice-president in charge of merchandising, learned his business in Memphis, Tenn. Over at Gimbels', a block away, the general manager, until recently, was Sheldon R. Coons, who learned his business in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and who was summoned to New York from Portland, Ore. A character in "June Moon" observed, "There are three million Jews in New York alone." To which another retorted, "What do you mean, alone?" But all of them did not arrive direct by steamship from Europe. The Gimbels, for example, founded their business in the West in 1842. They turned eastward to New York only in 1910.

And finally there is Kenneth Collins, whose story I like best of all. The story isn't very long, for he isn't very old. He landed in New York in 1925 with thirteen dollars in his pockets. To-day, at thirty-three, executive vice-president in charge of advertising at Macy's, he calmly spends two million, five hundred thousand dollars a year.

Western, of old pioneer stock, he was born in St. Paul, Minn., and grew up in Spokane, Wash. After graduating from the University of Washington in 1920 he taught English for two years at the University of Idaho. Then, to become a better English professor, he took three post-graduate years at Harvard. He had to work his way. As luck would have it, he happened to hear of an advertising job to be had with a small Boston store. What he knew about advertising could have been written home on a postal card. But he took the job, cold, entirely on nerve. And to-day, slim, alert, easy-going, unconventional, he has created what is virtually a revolution in advertising methods.

For the first time New York shoppers have found it fun to read store news. With a Western disregard for tradition, Collins has put humor into hard business. His amiable advertisements are as easy to read as the comic pages. He smiles New York into buying his wares, makes shopping seem like going to a new show. And those advertisements, always fresh and filled with the sparkle of Manhattan, are written by Westerners and Southerners. There are five chief copy-writers on the Macy staff, highly paid. Three are from Washington, one from California, and one is from Maryland.

New York is a writer's town. Most of the writers, as H. L. Mencken has observed, come in on the hoof. Elmer Davis, the town novelist ("I'll Show You the Town" and "The Keys to the City"), arrived from Aurora, Ind. Charles Hanson Towne, the town poet, was born in Louisville, Ky. George Jean Nathan, the ineffable town critic, beau-brummelled in from Fort Wayne, Ind., though he promptly forgot that fact. John Dos Passos had to journey from Chicago to write "Manhattan Transfer." Poets and novelists seem inevitably to drift to New York, even after achieving fame living in and writing about their own local color. Even Willa Cather deserted her Nebraska for Greenwich Village; and, having written his Spoon River poems, Edgar Lee Masters is content now with 23d Street and Seventh Avenue. It was O. Henry, from North Carolina and Texas, who first romanticized New York in fiction, and it is George S. Kaufman, from Pittsburgh,

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who doctors the Broadway plays to-day for the tourist trade. Washington Irving was about the last native New York writer.

F. P. Adams, the paragrapher, as native an exponent of Manhattan wit as you are apt to find, originated in Chicago. Indeed, I am in doubt just what I mean by that phrase "Manhattan wit." Never has the sophisticated lustre of Manhattan been gardened more expertly than by that bright weekly, *The New Yorker*. Here is the apotheosis of the New York attitude. The editor is Harold Ross, born in Aspen, Colo., who has lived in New York only since the World War. Of his associates, Mrs. K. S. White arrived from Boston and James Cain arrived from Baltimore. So far as I know, Wolcott Gibbs is the only member of the editorial staff who was born in New York.

And how the hinterland lawyers make themselves at home in New York! George Gordon Battle was born on Cool Spring Plantation, Edgecomb County, N. C. Two years after graduating from the University of Virginia, a year after being admitted to the bar, he was an assistant New York County district attorney. Martin Littleton, born on a farm in Roane County, Tenn., was an assistant district attorney in Brooklyn four years after arriving from the South and four years later was borough president. Joab H. Banton, from Waco, Texas, was elected district attorney in Manhattan in 1920 and kept the office for eight years. And just to show what a droll place New York is, it was Supreme Court Justice William Harmon Black, of a distinguished Atlanta family, who gave the oath of office recently to New York's first Negro municipal court justice.

And those grasping New York bankers! Walk into the Guaranty Trust Co., second largest bank in the city. The president is W. C. Potter, from Chicago. The galaxy of directors includes J. H. Ardrey, from Dallas, Texas; Eugene W. Stetson, from Hawkinsville, Ga.; Merrel P. Calloway, from Mitchell County, Ga., and David Franklin Houston, from Monroe, N. C., eight years in Wilson's Cabinet, before that educator to the South, now president of the Mutual Life Insurance Co. and vice-president of both the American Telephone and Telegraph and the New York Telephone companies.

Percy Hampton Johnston, president of the Chemical National Bank, came from Louisville, Ky.; and when banks were crashing in the old home town recently he rushed back there to found his own bank as a gibraltar for his lifelong friends. Louis Seagrave, burly, blond-headed, six foot tall, strides through Wall Street like a football-player. He graduated from the University of Washington in 1917 and is now president of the United Founders, one of the largest investment trusts in the world, with three hundred million dollars of resources. And the board chairman of the Chase National is Charles S. McCain, from Pine Bluff, Ark.

For that matter, J. Pierpont Morgan, the elder, who made New York money mean what it does, was born in Hartford, Conn., a small town's rich man's son. And John D. Rockefeller, Jr., richest man in New York to-day, was born in Cleveland, Ohio.

Irving T. Bush, builder of the Bush Terminals, the greatest marine shipping complex in the world, was born in Ridgeway, Mich. His one hundred and twenty-five warehouses, eight piers, and eighteen lofts, housing three hundred manufacturing reservoirs, cover thirty city blocks. And New York harbor is filled with fellow provincials. P. A. S. Franklin, born in Ashland, Md., is president of the International Mercantile

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Marine Co., which controls the Atlantic Transport, Panama Pacific, Red Star and Leyland lines. Paul W. Chapman, who was born in Jersey County, Ill., and who started his career as a Chicago bank messenger at seven dollars a week, paid sixteen million, eighty-two thousand dollars for the United States and the American Merchant lines in 1929, and is now building two American ships to cost twenty-one million dollars. He is the main hope for a reborn American merchant marine.

The Reverend J. Randolph Ray, rector of the Little Church Around the Corner, grew up on a plantation near Jackson, Miss., and was summoned to Manhattan from Dallas. The crusading John Haynes Holmes, pastor of the Community Church, who hurls brimstone at Tammany, the one minister able to handle New York like a village, was born in Philadelphia. The late John Roach Straton, fiery Fundamentalist of Calvary Church, and the Reverend William Norman Guthrie, pastor of St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, where Grecian dancers help interpret the Gospel, were both members of that unreconstructed college fraternity Southern Kappa Alpha, the one from Mercer University in Georgia and the other from Sewanee in Tennessee. The Reverend Guthrie's schoolmate at Sewanee was Bishop William T. Manning, whose monument will be the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, greatest cathedral of the Western hemisphere.

When I was a lad in New Orleans I used to resent bitterly that New Orleans newspapers were so controlled, edited and written by men from the North. The tables are turned now. There are so many Southern newspapermen running things in New York that January 19 is almost a legal holiday.

A. R. Holcombe, born in Mobile, Ala., is managing editor of the Republican *Herald Tribune;* Stanley Walker, from Lampassas, Texas, is city editor; Charles McLendon, from Fort Worth, is night city editor. The managing editor of the equally hidebound *Sun* is Keats Speed, from Atlanta, Ga.

Adolph Ochs, from Chattanooga, Tenn., owns *The Times.* Medill Patterson and R. R. McCormick, from Chicago, own *The News,* with its million and a quarter circulation. William Randolph Hearst, from California, owns *The American* and *The Journal.* Scripps-Howard, which grew to power in the West and South, owns *The World-Telegram,* of which Lee B. Wood, from Cleveland, Ohio, is executive editor, and Dan Williams, once a Texas county attorney, is editorial writer, and Colonel Joe Williams, from Memphis, Tenn., is sports editor. Roy Howard, New York's most dynamic publisher, a Manhattanite as inveterate as O. O. McIntyre himself, grew up in Indiana. He better than any one proves the Americanization of New York. Head—with Robert P. Scripps—of what Westerners become New Yorkers liked to refer to as a hick outfit, he built a dominant newspaper in New York within four years and hooked it to a chain of newspapers that know America from sunrise to sunset. And George B. Parker, the national editor-in-chief, who from his Park Avenue office directs a continent of Scripps-Howard newspapers, arrived from Oklahoma. Alas, about the only real New York newspaperman left in New York is Heywood Broun, and he really shouldn't be counted, for he is a columnist and, like Al Capone, was born in Brooklyn.

No, I forget! Walter Winchell, whose column is a source of information for every newspaper in New York, was born in Manhattan. He creates New York's slang. He manufactures conversation for New York's drawing-rooms.

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The man who made Manhattan baby-conscious, he knows Broadway better than any man alive, and detests that street, I sometimes believe, even more than I do.

Tex Rickard built Madison Square Garden and became the czar of the cauliflower industry. Tex Guinan bought some wooden table-hammers and became the middle-aged queen of Broadway. If New York is not American, what in the name of patriotism is it?

And I might as well answer that question. New York is the soul of America. It is what America became when Pickett and his gray-clad men fell back from the crest of Gettysburg. It is smoke and steel and power and money. It is the tradesman's paradise. It is what every town in America, Western and Southern, wants now to become. It is a culmination of what began with Grant and ended in Harding. It is greed made grand, a thousand accents gathered from the ends of the earth to make factory fodder and dividends. It is capital of the next thousand years, and is unutterably cheap. And Americans, even the sons of the Grand Army veterans, see it for the first time and wonder how all this happened in a free, pioneer land.

Grace After Love

By Jean Starr Untermeyer

Against the thunderbolts God sent
My courage firmed as adamant;
Not knowing them to be His will
Endurance hardened into steel.
Until he melted me with love
I was unpliant to His word.

Thou, loving adversary, oft
Mistook my nature, till bereft
Of nearness thou couldst see all plain
And suit thy measure to my plan.
Now warmed and willing by thy love
I yield to thine as to His word.

Law laid on the untutored mind
First frights, then frets it without end.
Love must unfreeze the stiffened sod
Before it can encase the seed.
Grace came before the asking word.
I thank both Him and thee for love.

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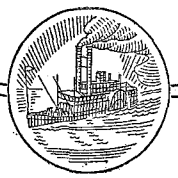

The Legion Prepares for War

By MARCUS DUFFIELD

The American Legion, powerful instrument of ex-service men, having achieved the bonus loans which cost the government more than a billion dollars, is now bracing itself for another big-navy battle in the next Congress. Mr. Duffield shows the methods of the Legion officials in bringing pressure to bear and in acting as civil arm of the War Department.

PRESIDENT HOOVER has called attention to the fact that the United States is spending more on armament for future wars than any European nation—more in toto and more per capita—and that while other countries of the world are spending about the same as they did before the war, this country is spending about three times as much as it did. This rather startling increase in our war budget is not entirely attributable to the efforts of our War and Navy Departments. War Departments always have sought to get more appropriations, because it is their business. But now they have back of them and working with them for the first time a large and influential body of citizenry. For the American Legion has constituted itself a gigantic war department of 800,000 members, which carries on throughout the country a campaign for big army, big navy, and the strongest air force in the world.

The American Legion feels that the United States must reconcile itself to the fact that the world has only "signed an armistice," as one of its commanders publicly declared; and that this country should take advantage of the present international lull in fighting to build up its martial forces. Such foresight would be doubly wise, it feels: by becoming thoroughly formidable in defense, this country would serve the cause of peace through discouraging other nations from attacking, and thus delaying the inevitable conflict; and, secondly, we should be laying the groundwork to come out on top of the heap.

There is, however, a considerable group of people who differ from this plan of peace, and they cannot be ignored, because among them are noteworthy world figures such as H. G. Wells, John Dewey, Albert Einstein, Selma Lagerloff, Jane Addams, and Rabindranath Tagore. They all signed a peace manifesto saying that the world's arming, in which the United States leads the way, seems to them inconsistent with the various international pacts outlawing war; that instead of training youth for war, we should be educating the newer generation to thoughts of peace and ways of utilizing and improving upon the various methods of pacific adjudication which have been worked out among the nations; that "the time has come when every sincere lover of peace should demand the abolition of military training of youth and should

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deny the right of governments to impose conscription."

People whose minds run like this—against whom the Legion, of course, has sternly set its face—have evolved a philosophy of peace which lays great stress on psychological factors. They feel that it is impossible to be striving for peace and at the same time training and planning for war. They feel, to apply this philosophy, that if a great nationwide organization numbering 12,000 posts, as does the Legion, throws itself into a campaign for war preparation, it tends to shut out from the mind of the nation that will to peace which is regarded as indispensable in eliminating war from the world.

Such thinkers hold that the method of arming more heavily than one's neighbor is an old-fashioned way of promoting peace, which has not proved itself entirely successful, but on the contrary has actually fostered the war spirit in the past in Europe. They point out that the more any one nation arms, the more alarmed its neighbors become; that an atmosphere of suspicion is cultivated, rather than an attitude of trust which smooths the way toward arbitration of frictions. They are apt to cite, for example, the emphasis with which English newspapers displayed President Hoover's mention of our rather large war budget. They add that no matter how pure a nation's motives may be in building up armaments, there is an almost inevitable tendency to begin picturing a foe, and talking about it, which does not help good feeling. Brigadier-General John Ross Delafield, former chairman of the Legion's Defense Committee, for instance, assured a patriotic gathering in New York City that Soviet Russia would attack when its five-year-plan was achieved.

Thus the issue is drawn between the advocates of two very different routes to the common goal. There are those, on the one hand, who urge the building of a mass desire for peace. They run the risk of being labelled pacifists. On the other hand, there are those who favor, also in the cause of peace, building a war machine. They run the risk of being confused with chauvinists.

The fact that the American Legion has chosen the latter route is of special interest because of its great power in the nation. The power already has been demonstrated by the facility with which the Legion's political lobby in Washington moved Congress to rush through the so-called bonus bill last spring increasing the loan payments to veterans. This suggests that the Legion's choice of a route to peace is likely to be the nation's choice. Therefore it would seem worth while to examine the details and consider the wisdom of such a method.

II

The American Legion, freed of matters of more immediate concern to itself, has now set itself definitely to the task of making America ready for the next war. Without ceasing to mention its hope for peace, the Legion is pursuing the matter of preparedness with a comprehensive efficiency as remarkable as its driving force.

A government committee appointed by President Hoover, composed of four cabinet members, two senators and two representatives, is studying at the present time plans for a universal draft, and is under instruction to report its findings to Congress when that body convenes for the new session in December. The story back of the creation of that committee is a story, not without its element of the dramatic, of a ten-year struggle on the part of the American Legion, now slowly coming to fruition.

In 1921 the annual national conven-

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tion of the Legion heard a proposal that a plan of nation-wide preparedness be drawn up by the organization. The proposal met with favor, and the national commander appointed a committee to look into the matter.

The personnel of the committee is interesting in several ways. When the Legionnaires were fresh from the war, they did not have a kindly feeling for the military régime in general. A note of antagonism crept into a resolution in the first national convention in 1919 which called for "a thorough housecleaning of the inefficient officers and methods of our entire military establishment." This did not augur well for cooperation between the Legion and the War Department. Yet by 1921 when the important Legion committee for universal draft was appointed, it turned out to be composed mostly of army officers directly under the orders of the War Department. The members were Colonel George E. Leach, Major-General Hanson E. Ely, Major-General Edward L. Logan, Colonel Arthur F. Crosby, Brigadier-General John McA. Palmer, Colonel Oswald McNeese, and Colonel D. John Markey. Possibly old differences had been forgotten.

This committee was an important milestone marking the progress of cordial, even intimate, relations between the Legion and the War Department. Several factors contributed to the alliance. In the years immediately following the war there was a reaction through the country which led to a wave of what amounted almost to pacifism. Peace conferences and arms reductions were in the air, and business, from the point of view of the War and Navy Departments, fell off; young men were not so eager to enlist in the services. Something had to be done, and the War Department no doubt was wise enough to realize that the American Legion, with its widely placed posts and its increasing political power, could be a very useful collaborator. Then, too, there is a human element: if an ex-private and five generals are on a committee together, in all likelihood there will be a tendency for the private to speak softly. Although the Legion officially drops rank and title among members, its standing committees on military, naval, air, and defense affairs are usually men of great experience, and frequently in active service.

At any rate, when the Legion committee reported, it produced an elaborate plan for universal draft, which had the endorsement of the Army General Staff. The plan called for a law giving the President power to control material resources and industrial organizations of the nation and fix prices not only in war time, but when war was imminent, and to draft everybody, setting some to work and some to fight. This seemed good to the Legion, for it was presented as a means of making the whole nation take part without profit to any one and without putting the whole burden of sacrifice on the soldiers. So it was adopted and has been one of the Legion's major objectives ever since. It was originally, and still is, put forward to the nation as a scheme to promote peace, on the ground that it would eliminate the profiteering incentive to war and make war generally disagreeable all around. So attractive has universal draft been made to sound that one prominent editor suggested awarding it the Bok Peace Prize. This was perhaps the first time that a War Department project had ever been mentioned for a peace prize.

For the Legion universal draft plan is in essence a project of the General Staff. The core of the plan is the provision for immediate conscription on the outbreak of war, to do away with the delay of the volunteer system which has been the

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pride—or the folly—of this country since the Declaration of Independence. Secretaries of War long have been pleading with Congress to enact a conscription law, but Congress never would assume the responsibility of doing so in time of peace. The present Secretary of War, a Legionnaire, has announced that he has withdrawn his department's standing request with Congress for a conscription law—he will rest on hope of obtaining action on a plan such as that of the Legion.

Persistently and shrewdly through the years the Legion has been pushing its universal draft. First it was drawn up as a bill, by Legionnaires in Congress, and the Legion engineered hearing after hearing, but Congress refused time and again to pass it.

When the Legion finally succeeded in getting Congress to authorize the present committee to investigate the subject, the House eliminated, in its resolution, the consideration of the conscription of labor, and authorized the committee to proceed with the study of drafting property and soldiers. The Senate thereupon passed the resolution, eliminating the study of the use of private property without profit during wartime. The part about conscripting soldiers remained.

III

The Legion has many other plans for our army, some of which have already met with success, while others remain to be pushed. The National Defense Act of 1920, probably the most comprehensive plan this country has had, embodied many of the suggestions offered by the then infant though willing Legion. Later it mentioned that this law "came into existence through the united effort of the ex-service men." Having thus assisted at the birth, the Legion has regarded the Defense Act rather in the light of an adopted child, and assumed responsibility for its career. "The successful development of the army," said the second national convention, "particularly that of the National Guard and organized reserves, depends largely on the continued efforts and wholehearted co-operation of the American Legion."

The "wholehearted co-operation" has consisted primarily in urging more appropriations every time Congress meets. The War Department, seeking the nation's funds for its work, finds itself no longer a voice crying in the wilderness. It is joined by a chorus thousands strong shouting into the sensitive ears of Congressmen through the Legion's political lobby in Washington.

At times the Legion even outdoes the General Staff in zeal for preparedness, as exampled by "two smashing victories," as the lobby reported, in the seventieth Congress. The War Department allowed Congress to cut down the number of reserve officers to be trained by the government from 20,000 to 16,000, and cut down the appropriation for national rifle matches so that they could be held only every alternate year instead of every year. The Legion lobby urged the House Appropriations Committee to be more liberal with government funds, but failed to prevail, and the fight was carried to the floor of the House. After the lobby chief, as he reported, "addressed a letter to each Member of the House calling attention to the situation and asking co-operation in favor of the Legion's amendments," the bill passed both the House and the Senate by large majorities. "So the Legion won on both counts"—the 4,000 extra officers were trained, and $500,000 more spent on rifle matches.

"The Legion Committee on Military Affairs," its report to the 1928 convention began, "with few exceptions has

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supported recommendations for appropriations and legislation requested by the Secretary of War for all the components of the Army of the United States. The Committee has also co-operated with the National Guard Association, Reserve Officers' Association, and National Rifle Association in furthering special military policies requested by these organizations." These organizations must indeed find the Legion a boon.

The matter of rifle matches is a favorite issue. The Legion's first demand was for universal military training for all young men, but this proposal was so foreign to American tradition, savored so much of the militaristic European system, that even the Legion's power was insufficient to force it through Congress. It has not been forgotten, however. As a substitute, the Legion has bent its efforts toward making this a country of expert rifle shots. "We recommend," said the 1929 convention, "a progressive programme for training the youth of our nation in rifle marksmanship as a substantial contribution to the national defense." In accordance with this, each of the 12,000 Legion posts is urged to sponsor a rifle club in its community, and the Legion likewise is forming rifle teams of its own members to take part in the national matches at Camp Perry every year, and to shoot against foreign teams from the FIDAC.

Perhaps the most ambitious military endeavor of the Legion has been brought to flower within the last year. The Legion noted the difficulty of getting sufficient Congressional appropriations for the Citizens' Military Training Camps throughout the country, which, it feels, should prepare 50,000 young men each summer to fight the next war. Shrewdly the Legion hit upon the idea that if thousands more men than could be accommodated in the camps were to apply each year, then Congress would be persuaded that there was a wide demand among its constituents. So the Legion systematically has set about constituting itself a vast recruiting agency for the C. M. T. C. A volunteer organization has been constructed to parallel the army system, with a chairman in charge of each army corps area, corresponding to its general. The chairman directs the work of each post in his district in tempting the young men of the neighborhood to enroll, by picturing the personal pleasures and patriotic necessity of subjecting themselves to military drill in their holidays.

If the youth of America isn't ready to take up arms at a moment's notice, surely it will not be the fault of the Legion.

IV

A further step in the American Legion's campaign to insure peace by preparing for the next war is the drive for a big navy. This effort is no doubt responsible for a part of the United States' trebled post-war armaments budget. The Legion has insistently demanded in virtually every session of Congress more:

submarines
airplanes
naval bases
cruisers
small ships
men

and bigger:

fortifications
merchant marine
reserves
guns
war games

Put war plans on every American merchant vessel! the Legion demands. Modernize our antiquated battle-ships! Raise the elevation of our guns! Train

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our merchant crews for war! Lest their motive be misunderstood, the Legion explains that "to maintain the navy's proper ratio under the 5-5-3 treaty, and to keep it properly manned and equipped, is our best and cheapest guaranty of national peace. . . ."

The Legion was sorely tried in 1928 when "enemies of American safety" struck a "decisive blow at national defense" by getting Congress to reduce the number of new cruisers to be constructed to fifteen. This was despite the testimony of E. E. Spafford, national commander, before the House Naval Affairs Committee that the signers of the 5-5-3 Treaty had constructed 300 vessels, of which only sixteen were built by the United States, and that "we have dropped from first to about third place."

President Hoover went a step too far, the Legion felt, when in the following year he suspended building on three of the ships. He gave that order after Ramsay MacDonald's visit to America as a reply to the British prime minister's order that work be halted on two British ships. The press and the public both in England and America rejoiced at this sign of tangible will to curtail naval rivalry. Not the Legion. "The Legion protests," telegraphed its national commander, Paul V. McNutt, "against any action by the Chief Executive to prevent in any way the regaining by the United States of its lost naval parity with England." Even if England had stopped building two cruisers, he said, the United States would still be 75,000 tons short when all its fifteen were finished. He reminded Mr. Hoover of "the one-sided sacrifice which resulted from the United States' zeal for peace at the Washington Conference when our scrapping of the most modern battle-fleet in the world led to our present cruiser inferiority."

The President replied to this rebuke by referring to problems of peace "far more intricate and difficult than can be solved by the simple formula you suggest," and pointed out that "by constant expansion of naval strength we cannot fail to stimulate fear and ill will throughout the rest of the world toward both of us."

This fall the Legion is bracing itself for another big-navy battle in Washington. It feels that our navy has been allowed to fall below the allotment provided by the London Naval Conference of last year. No sooner had the Legion succeeded in putting through the bonus bill last spring than the capital lobby directed its great energies toward urging more navy building, but it was too late in the session to accomplish anything further. The public may soon expect statements to the press and speeches throughout the country by Legion leaders who will stress our naval weakness and the need to build; the Congressional committeemen may expect to be buttonholed by Legion lobbyists; and every representative and senator may expect to be deluged with Legion letters from all corners of the nation.

V

So convinced has the Legion become that its own virile route to peace is the only right route, that it has come to regard as bitter foes those who sponsor meeker methods.

Dotted through the records of the Legion lobby in Washington are items headed in italics: "Legislation Defeated." These contain the pithy stories of how the Legion crushed what it regarded as the misguided efforts of "pacifists" to obtain legislative gestures against war. The Legion is inclined to feel that such gestures are not always even well-meaning, and to suspect that they have some obscure sinister intent. Hence the

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name "pacifist," certainly not discreditable by derivation, has become in the Legion's eyes—and through it and other patriotic societies, to a certain extent in the nation's eyes—a term of opprobrium, to be bracketed with "bolshevik," "radical," and "intellectual." Although some of the people who differ from the Legion as to method of peace promotion are doubtless not actually dangerous characters, still it will be difficult to discriminate between fine shades of opinion when the next war breaks out, so the Legion feels it might as well lump them all together now as unpatriotic.

Ever alert in Washington, the Legion lobbyists keep watch on these treasonable efforts and when necessary leap into politics to save Congress from being hoodwinked into overly pacific moves. For example, the Legion found that Representative Welsh had introduced a bill providing for awarding diplomas in certain of our land-grant colleges to students who had not drilled. Now this is a sore point; the Legion has been to some pains to scotch a movement among college students of the country to throw off compulsory military training. The Legion insists that a college president who responds to such student demand must be disciplined by immediate withdrawal of any government aid he may be getting. If the Welsh Bill had gone through, removing the requirements of military courses for graduation, an entering wedge would have been driven, and there is no telling how rampant pacifism might have run among the nation's students once they were free to elect or reject military training. Therefore, the Legion lobby applied what detractors are wont to call the thumb-screw on Congress, and the Welsh Bill was killed.

The lobby was almost caught napping on the Burton Resolution. Mr. Burton felt that one way to make wars less profitable, less extensive, and perhaps less attractive would be for the United States to lead the way among nations in forbidding its manufacturers from capitalizing on war by exporting munitions to whatever other nations might be fighting. The Legion lobby afterward reported that this "innocent-looking resolution" was virtually sneaked into Congress and scheduled for unanimous consent passage "with only a handful of members in the House." In the nick of time the lobby called a halt and pleaded for delay, pointing out that if the United States didn't keep its hand in, making guns and bullets, we certainly should be inept making them when the next war came.

Telegrams were sent to Legionnaires through the country to bring pressure on their Congressmen, National Commander Spafford rushed to Washington, and a meeting of the Legion National Defense Committee was called under the shadow of the Capitol. This stalwart group, composed of a captain, a colonel, three generals, and a civilian, quickly placed itself "on record as being unalterably opposed" to the passage of the Burton Resolution.

The menace of this bill faded, and toward the end of the session, as the lobby reported with a sigh of relief, "it was apparent that due to the Legion's opposition and the opposition of those in the national capital who were interested in national defense that (*sic*) the Burton Resolution was a dead letter."

Mr. Burton has been quite a trouble to the Legion, for it had to mobilize its legislation-quashing machine on another occasion because of his penchant for peace gestures. Back in 1922 the use of poison gas was prohibited as too horrible a weapon by a section of the Washington Arms Conference agreement. This was ratified by the United States and by other nations, but did not be-

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come effective because France rejected that section on account of a provision about submarines. Four years later, Mr. Burton brought the issue of poison gas into the Geneva Conference, to which he was an American delegate, and the representatives of forty-four countries agreed to bar its use. He anticipated no difficulty in obtaining Senate ratification of the Geneva Protocol; in fact, the consent was on the point of being gained when the Legion objected.

The lobby noted that the sentiment to ratify was "fostered mostly by the group of pacifists who have as their ultimate object the elimination of war entirely," and summoned nationwide help against such extremists. Twenty-five thousand copies of a pamphlet were sent out presenting the argument that America must not relinquish poison gas because it was one of the most humane weapons of warfare, and besides it would help bring wars to a speedy termination, instantly crippling whole armies without necessarily killing them. Pressure was brought to bear at all points, agitation continued for months as only the Legion knows how, and the protocol prohibiting poison gas was never ratified.

There was an odd little sequel. Representative Hamilton Fish discovered and mentioned in Congress that the head of the Legion lobby all the while had also served as treasurer of an association of chemical officials which, he suggested, was carrying on propaganda financed by chemical industries to defeat the Geneva Protocol. This evidence of its lobbyist's serving in a double rôle did not disturb the Legion. It evidently regarded the National Association of Chemical Defense as a brother patriotic society.

Occupied as it is in building up the nation's armaments for the next war, the Legion has had little interest in helping along the major moves toward world peace in which the government has from time to time indulged. There will be plenty of time for that later. "While we are all interested," as the Legion lobby remarked, "in the reduction of armament and the subsequent elimination of war, we know that this is an ideal that is only for the future, and in the meantime the American Legion is definitely aware of the steps being taken to interfere with our own national defense programme by the pacifists who seem to hold sway for the moment."

Peace gestures, in fact, are regarded circumspectly by the Legion. It is never quite sure when our country will venture a little too far; doubts assail it as to the safety of the nation in the hands even of official delegations to international conferences that are openly anti-war in purpose.

"Resolved," resolved the tenth convention, "that the national defense committee of the American Legion recommends to the President that at all international peace, disarmament or similar conferences involving the question of national security in which the United States is a participant or has an observer, official or otherwise, the American Legion be accorded a representative at such international conferences."

For a few years the Legion advocated adherence to the World Court, but it dropped that stand as too controversial. As for the Kellogg Treaty, it is all right in its way, if we do not take it too seriously. It won a lukewarm endorsement in the San Antonio convention, but the resolution hastened to add that "we desire that the American Legion make it clear to our people that the approval of this treaty does not in any way guarantee peace." This led up to a warning against reducing our military establishment.

The Legion sees the olive branch through a mass of oak foliage.

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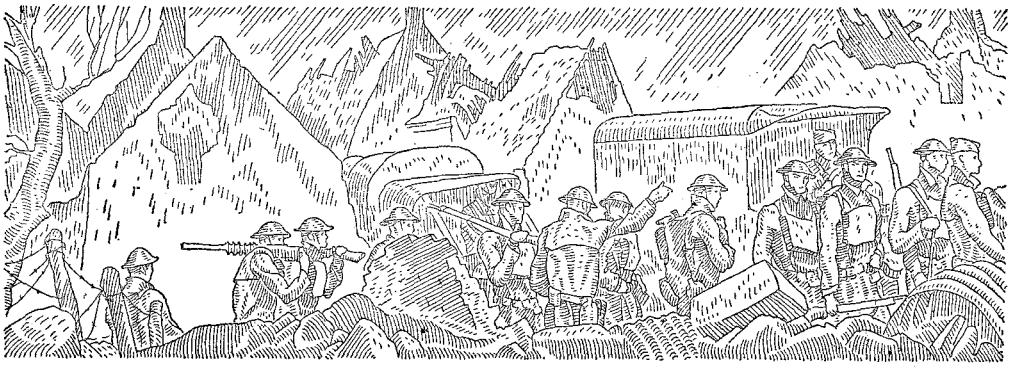

CALL IT A DAY

By EDWARD SHENTON

By his drawings, Mr. Shenton has enhanced the unique quality of an already noteworthy story. So effective is the use of two mediums by the author-artist that it caused us to depart from our custom of not publishing illustrations. The story takes its place in the distinguished series of short novels which is appearing in SCRIBNER'S. Although written about the war, "Call It a Day" is written from a new point of view and by use of an unusual technic. The result is a peculiarly personal story—one in which the individual human spirit is the core.

I

Corporal Wakely: *Dawn.*

THE rain continued as the division moved forward. Thirty thousand men shouldering the rain-weighted darkness; men, indistinct, shapeless; endless men surging out of the rain-dark nothingness, vanishing into the empty black pit of the rain-blackness. The earth a jelly beneath; the heavens liquid above. Men coming and coming until they were only an upflowing of shadows from dark into dark. The night moving and moaning in one vast sound made from a million sounds; a continuous sighing resolved from words, oaths, gasps, breathing, shouts, orders, feet in the mud, wheels, hoofs, tires, axles, equipment, cloth, weariness, excitement . . . the whole black earth arising in shapes of men, rolling on through the slime along the raw torn shoulders of the land. Men no longer, except as each one kept a tight hold upon his own dissolving identity. Blind, unimpassioned, forward-sweeping, the full tide of nameless, no-more men.

A fragment of the tide, Perc Wakely was filled with a brief moment of wonder. The world was in motion and he moved with it, borne on a fierce exultation; the cumulative illusion of nations of men at war. The actual battle with its shocking reality lay far away in unimagined space. Let the drugged mind remain unanticipating, trapped by the mystic horde of on-moving shadows of men. Let to-morrow's dead feel the strength of the countless dim columns

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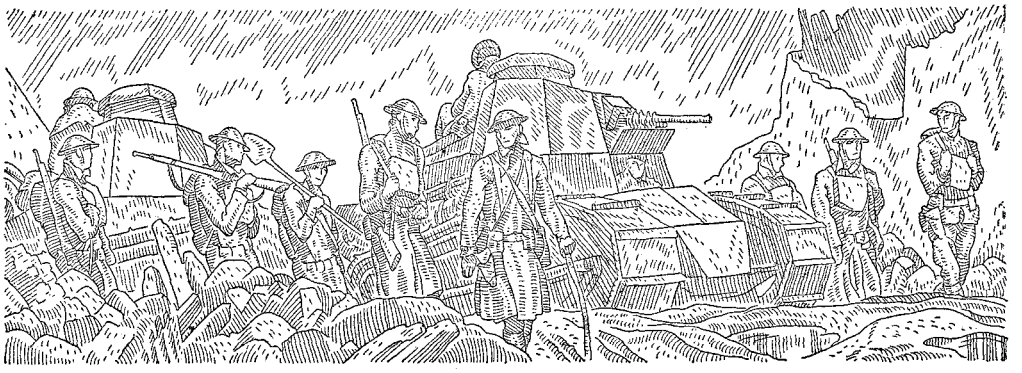

of the still living, and believe they cannot die. Spurn the thick mud of the beaten earth with lusty feet, steam the night with the warmth of laboring bodies, fret and curse and feel the rub of well-filled cartridge belts on swinging hips; beat the horses, shove the dragging wheels of the gun-carriages. Move up the guns. . . . "Way for the tanks!" "Give way to the right." "Get the hell out of the way!" Stumbling and slipping and sweating in the rain. Crash and clang of metal in motion. The machines rattling, crackling with raucous energy. Push the dim lumps of flesh and blood into the slime-deep ditches. Stench of burnt gasoline mingling with the other smells. "Lookit the little bastards!" "Those babies don't give a damn for mud." "Give way to the right!" "Sergeant, get those men off the road!" Squat walruses of steel with round bulbs on the middle of their flat backs, banging away into the unknown ahead. . . . Crossroads in a ruined town. Guns swinging to the right; men pouring from the left. In power and majesty the war surging forward through the stink of time-rotted men. . . .

But the closer the actual battle came, the lonelier grew the way. The sounds diminished; the guns turned into the black fields and burrowed into the wet earth; the trucks huddled behind the still walls of towns. Diminuendo of the war song. Voices became silent. The columns thinned, slowed down. Everything muffled, weary, sliding into quiet: the night shredding toward dawn. . . . Perc's company left the road and halted in a little wood smelling of the dead. The men slept at once. Behind them the ponderous machinery of the war moved forward from far continents, across the remote seas, leaving no part of the world untouched, advancing and converging on the wood, the frail barrier of trees where Perc Wakely awoke suddenly. . . .

The rain had stopped, but in the woods the drip from the leaves continued the illusion of rain falling. Darkness still held earth and sky in one formless mass and only the objects near by retained shape and the semblance of reality. Oh, the dark night. . . . The dark came down between the trees, filled the interstices of bough and leaf, flowed into his mind, obscuring the past and future, leaving only a few rods of present, where the gaunt boles of trees, rank grass and bushes, and the lump of his pack placed on a mound of dirt at the head of the shallow hole in which he lay, comprised the universe.

He lay on his back, his arms folded under his head. Momentarily he emerged from the mould of the war, lost the fixed, unquestioning similarity that renders it difficult to distinguish one soldier from another, and appeared as he once had been, very young, handsome in a boyish, pleasant way; blond hair awry over his round skull, gray-blue eyes in unfocussed placidity; a pale

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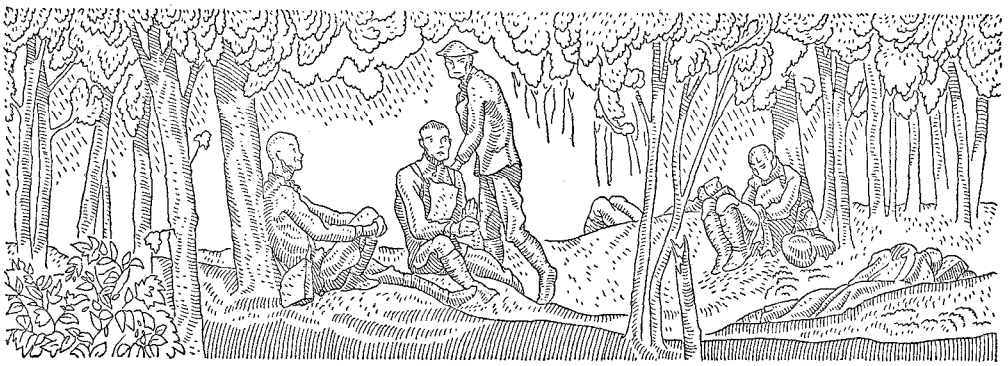

edge of whiskers along the firm line of his jaw.

He rested motionless, and drowsy satisfaction weighted his body; it was still asleep while his mind was awake in a kind of gray, cool clarity. He seemed to have shed his body, as a snake sheds its skin; the bright core of his life remained suspended in tranquil repose while flesh and bone had been stripped for a renewal. The war withdrew, as his body continued changing and renewing, and into the clear emptiness of his mind dropped fragments of the unnoted world about, striking upon the fragments of unseen memories, resolving them into transitory images. . . . A leaf was a bough, a bough was a tree, the gray was the sky, became water, a pool filled with twilight, with goldfish, their long tails waving like leaves in the gray light, swaying, in the dusk-gray pool on his father's lawn at Chestnut Hill. . . . The thought lacked importance. His interest retreated. Some day he would return. . . . The renewal of flesh and bone continued; his body was gathering together, vigorous, refreshed, confident. He sat up noting the position of the men in his squad.

Private, First Class, Nicholas (Nicky) Ryan.
" Ezrah (Dad) Hendrickson.
" Emmanuel (the Wop) Rosetti.
" Joseph Marlow.
" Henry Landseer Burt 3d.
" George Mandel.
" Joseph (Joe) Jackson.

II

The Squad: *Dawn.*

The heavy sky delayed the dawn. The power and majesty of nations of men at war was no longer evident. The troops awaiting the moment of the attack braced themselves against the insidious panic of anticipation, each one solitary in himself, engrossed in his individual hopes and terrors.

Beyond the trees, the landscape solidified from the night-darkness; the gloom rolled up into the sky and the rounded hills, plumed with thickets, became visible along the edge of the paling east. . . . The black bushes, the black guns silent under the bushes, the black faces of last week's dead; black. . . . "Back! Get back, Burt! Stay back from the open." "Corporal, corporal, I had a presentment last night. . . . I dreamed I was watching the ducks in V wedges of wings and thin necks over the unruffled Chesapeake waters. Morning not yet at hand, but the water calm and flat and far-reaching. There were eight ducks flying in one flock. The last was an old fellow. I heard a gun. From a sedge-blinded point. The old duck fell, beating the air feebly with shattered wings." . . . "Rot, Dad, you and your presentiments." . . . "Well, I don't know, corporal" . . .

Who is Dad Hendrickson? He loves the land on which his father's house stands, he loves the wide bay before the house, the garden and truck farm behind, the heavy flight of bees, the tall,

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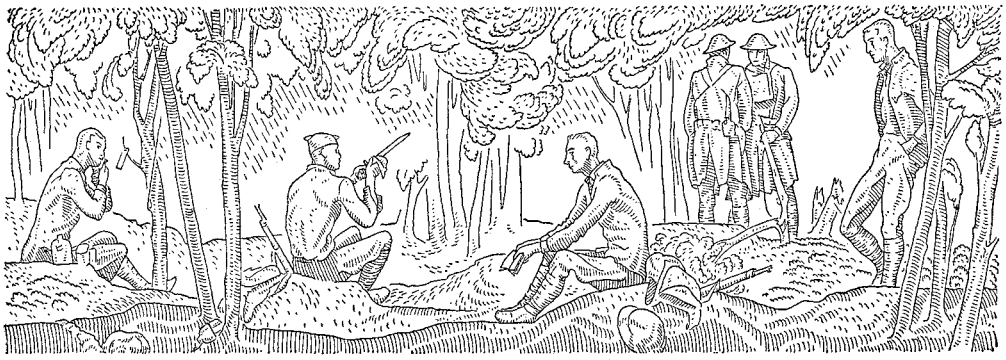

florid sunflowers, the deep nights when God broods over His recalcitrant children; he loves God and speaks of Him intimately to his class of boys in the Methodist Sunday-school. He enlisted to help the hand of God smite his enemies. Now he is not sure. God seems remote, unfriendly. He wants to return to the land he loves and find God again. . . . Corporal, corporal, I am uncertain and afraid. I am fifteen years older than you. Astonished, I lean on your young strength in the confusion of battle. In some mystical fashion God, whom I thought of as venerable, becomes a young man, blends with you. I never imagined war as it is; its brutality shocks me but its callousness revolts me. Remember Ryan, bending over the dead body of a French soldier robbing him; turning his pockets inside out, unfastening his cheap wrist watch? Later I saw him, tired of the novelty of these things, tossing them away, never thinking some woman might treasure them beyond price. No one seemed to care. Yet Ryan mocks death. He has no fear. "Corporal!" "What is it, Dad?" "I want you to take this package. In case anything happens." "Ol' calamity." "Shut up, Ryan." . . .

Who is Ryan? Red-headed and freckled and cold-tempered. Cold eyes of blue tempered steel. A mind impregnable in the moment. Driving a truck, unloading packing-cases with tireless, lean muscles, fighting on street corners for the sheer joy of feeling the warm strength rioting in his body. Grinning in the hot battle, pulling the pin of a grenade and tossing the black iron ball joyously. Nineteen years old and eager to feel his bayonet sink into the soft body of a man. Reckless, jeering at man and God. Carrying his life carelessly. Robbing the dead for souvenirs. Eternally curious. . . . Draw him aside. "Listen, Ryan, don't kid Dad. He's all on edge." "O. K., Perc." . . .

Who is Burt? Henry Landseer Burt 3d. Silence broods in his dark eyes; silence keeps his tongue; silence lies in his long white hands folded quietly over the stock of his rifle. He cleans the dirt from under his nails, uses valuable water to shave; he combs his hair, examining his thin dark silent face impassively in the tarnished trench mirror. No part of himself is shared in the common community of the squad. . . .

And Marlow? Pool-room lounger, petty grafter, alert, impudent, lazy, likable, impertinent; whistling, imitating birds, wizz-bangs, bullets, "Fiz-z-z-z—wham! Under cover, corp." So realistically the blood stands still in your veins. . . .

Rosetti, the Wop? Who knows what goes on in your misshapen head, behind your blank bright eyes. Madness in opacity. . . .

Jackson? A replacement. Five days in the outfit. "Ah come from Tennessee, Mister. Ah wisht ah was back there. . . ."

"Where's Mandel?"

"He went back in the woods."

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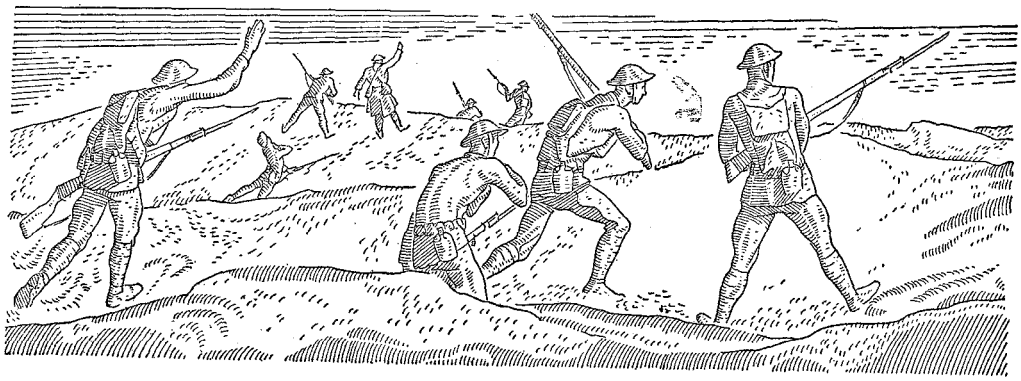

"Ryan, go get him."

"The lousy, yellow pimp."

. . . That was true. Used to stand on the platform of a railroad station in some town and hand out cards advertising a whorehouse to the travelling salesmen as they got off the trains; used to live in the house and have the use of the girls in payment. Frantic at the thought he might be killed and not able to return; lying and scheming, crawling, whining, anything that he might take his filthy hide back to handing out cards. Could it be he felt important, justified, necessary to the world when he slipped a card slyly into the hand of a stranger? . . . . How were they born, these seven? What sort of women cried out, bearing them in pain and blood? What manner of men begot them in lust or love? If they are all killed will the earth be poorer? Who will remember them and for how long? Who am I? . . .

"What's that? Oh, lieutenant. Yes, sir. All ready. Five forty-five. Squad columns. Yes, sir. Guide on first platoon."

"Take plenty of interval, corporal."

"Yes, lieutenant."

III

The Attack: *Dawn.*

At first the range was too high and the bullets rent the clear upper air of the valley, sheared the top branches of the trees, sending the clipped leaves fluttering down as though sudden autumnal winds had torn them from the boughs; passing with shrill sharp cries like birds stricken in flight; increasing in sound and number until the sound became nameless and the number countless and no one could remember any other sound or could give a name or a resemblance to the sound of the bullets. They stultified imagination so there were no longer comparisons for them. The sound, increasing, filled the outer world, began to overflow the world and fall into the brains of the men, into the cavities of their chests and bellies, into their hearts where it mingled with the blood circulating in their shaken bodies, replaced the blood, forcing it out of their bodies, leaving only the sound of the bullets to flow through them turning them cold and ashen and shuddering. . . . Occasionally erratic bullets, falling below the high current, following the sound that swept between the bullets and the fear-bent helmets of the advancing men, entered the bodies of several and the sound circulating within them came out of their lips in screams of anguish. Two soldiers died at once from the bullets and the other soldier, a young boy, a farmer boy who had never seen New York or slept with a girl, rolled over and over plucking at his chest where the bullet, content, lay like a white-hot ember. . . .

Then the bullets came lower and the new sounds startled the men with different fears. The fear and the bullets came closer at the same time. They resembled whips snapping and brittle sticks of wood cracking; their questing be-

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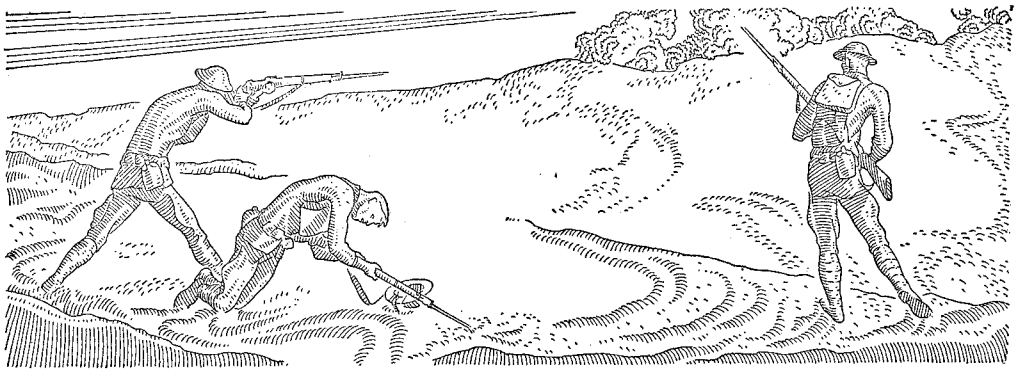

came personal, near at hand, terrifying. In the still dusky valley, they passed waist-high and the soldiers lay down in the wet grass with their eyes staring into the delicate webs spun by spiders between the thin blades of grass. The bullets came lower. A few men were caught on a mound and the bullets plucked out their brains, chewed and gnawed at their bodies, shredded their bones. There was a delirious feasting for minutes on end, the men crawling and dragging the weight of their bullet-filled bodies and more and more and more bullets seeking after them, until all the men lay quiet and the bullets went on other errands, searching livelier hosts. . . .

In the gun pits the German crews cuddled their hot machines, manipulating the efficient levers and triggers that released the swarming bullets. The long belts where the bullets waited uncurled jerkily and the steady sound of the exploding cartridges beat back under the low eaves of the gunners' helmets. It became difficult to find targets for the bullets and they eased their fingers on the warm triggers and wiped their sweated, intent faces.

When the bullets ceased, Perc and his squad arose from the ditch where they had been hidden and went forward.

IV

The Attack: *Morning.*

Burt died first, silently, his white, calm hands holding his rifle before him. The bayonet plunged into the soft, damp earth and the weapon projected like a clumsy spear. For a moment he clung grimly to the hot barrel and in his austere mind flickered curiously the sentence "I am dying; I'm sorry." It was a grotesque, unworthy way to die, clinging to the barrel of a rifle. He tried to straighten his legs and lie down naturally but they had gone away from him, and he could not turn his head to see what had happened to them. His face hung close to the bolt of the rifle and he could see distinctly the simple mechanism, sleek with oil. Then the rifle vanished and he had a glimpse of his hands, small and far away, the fingers slowly closing. There was no pain, only the world receding and a distant feeling of regret and sorrow. He fell forward, his face plunging into the cool grass. A great gush of blood burst from his mouth. . . .

Under the black bushes the hot black guns yammered. Burt's dead, corporal. Burt's dead. Yes, yes, I know, but which bush is hiding that gun? Where's that gun, Ryan? Which bush? Which of the dead black bushes? The one like a fan, to the left? The hunched old crone of a bush, squatting alone? Hey, Marlow, Marlow, is that smoke under that bush to the right? The tall bush; yes, the tall bush that looks like a sail. He was right beside me, corporal. He fell forward, on his rifle, like Saul on his sword. Our father who art . . . There it is! There it is, Perc. There the bastards are. I saw

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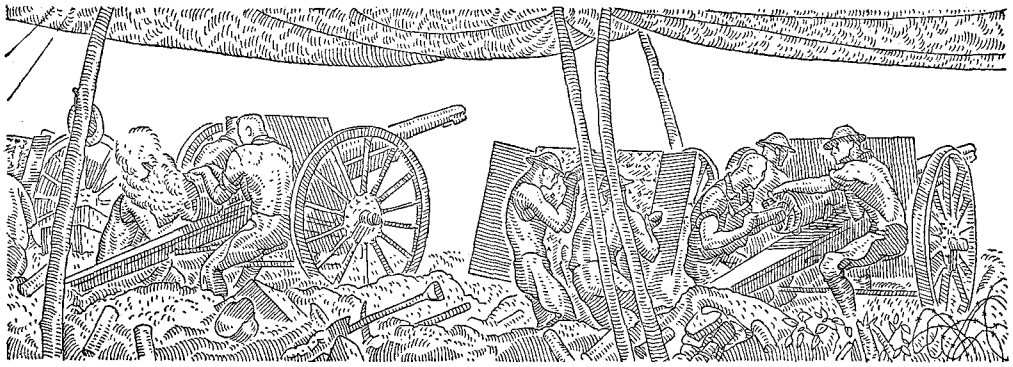

it spit. Oh, the lousy swine, the black-hearted lice. Work to the left, Ryan, along the ridge. Come on, you guys. Keep firing. Give Ryan a chance to work up close under the ridge. Where's the rest of the platoon? Marlow, can you see anybody? Not a soul. We're out too far, Perc. We ain't got no business out here so far. We oughtta stayed in that ditch. Madonna mia, eha, Santa Maria, save da soul of Emmanuele that goes out of his body . . . who will be keel be keel keel keel shut up Rosetti, damn you be keel the old duck fell fluttering like Burt. Corporal, shouldn't some one go back to see if Burt's really . . . There's the lieutenant. Now. Up under that rise. Come on, on come on! Get up, Mandel! What the hell, Oh, God, I can't, corporal. Get up! No, no, no, no, I can't, we'll be killed, we'll all be killed. . . . I'm going, I'm going back, I am, am I tell you, it's murder. Get up, you yellow bitch, you're not worth killing. . . . Far enough, take cover. Get down, Jackson. . . . Jackson! Hey, Jackson. . . .

Jackson died rolling over and over, holding his torn belly and trying not to scream, trying not to implore some dimly-sensed omnipotence who might transport his bleeding body back to a lazy sun-drenched town where he used to stand, where he was standing idly in the grateful shade of old oak trees, gossiping with the other fellows. If only the agony in his belly would depart he could enjoy being there again. . . . How clear everything was, the square with the white-pillared court-house, and the coke parlors, the teams hitched to the iron railing, and the heated air enclosing everything in languor. . . . Oh-h-h—! Some one beside him screaming. He mustn't scream. . . . Here, Jackson. Take a swallow of this. Swallowing the hot sunlight. You're a damn fool to enlist, Jackson. There's plenty others. No need for me to die. No need for any one to die. Is that you, corporal? Is some one hit? Oh, Burt. Yes, Burt's dead. . . . The black bushes, the old black crone bush hunched on the skyline, the tall bush, like a sail, rising over the black hot yammering gun that had killed Burt and killed Jackson. . . . Can nobody kill that gun? I can see the fine dust kicked up by the blast of air from its snout. Jackson's dead, corporal, Jackson's dead. *Madonna mia.* I'm goin' back, I'm goin' out of this. I'll kill anybody who tries to stop me. Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. . . . I'll be the next one. There were eight ducks flying. Out of the brittle sedge. Why am I afraid? It's not of death. It's fear of how I'll die. Will I shriek and writhe? Pain. I'm afraid of pain. Oh, God, take away the fear of pain too great to be borne silently. What? What is it, corporal? No, I can't see any one. . . . Now what do we do? I ought to get Ryan back here. We'll never get up there, this way. Stay flat until something happens. . . .

Nothing happened. No moving figure broke the long, desolate slope up to the

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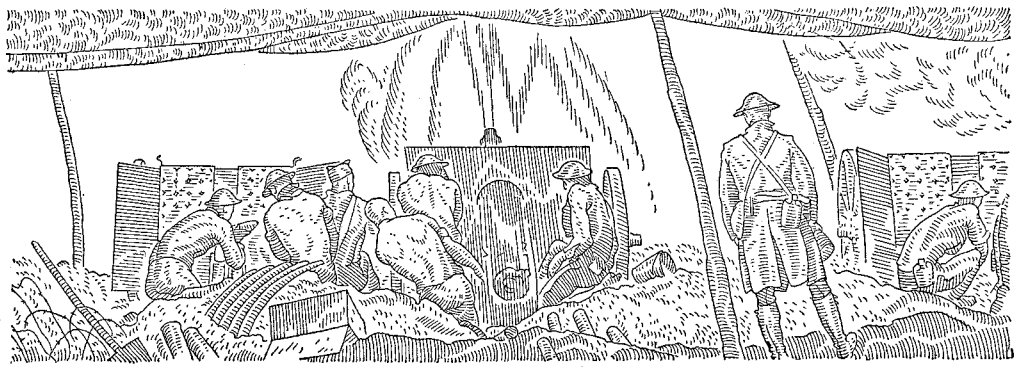

black bushes. Burt's body lay crumpled beside his projecting rifle. Its stock was frayed by bullets. Jackson stiffened slowly under the bank where they had dragged him. Already his face was the color of old stone; it had the look of stone; his gray eyes stared up into the sun and never blinked. The tension ran out of the living men and they felt exhausted; exhausted and solitary in themselves; alone, vulnerable to the chittering blind bullets passing just over their heads. Irresolute, they waited, unable to advance or retreat. No longer was the war a great machine uprooting the earth; its power and majesty was a fable. If there were a thousand guns why didn't they blast away the bent black crone bush in one volley; if there were a million men why couldn't they trample the tall dark bush under their heavy feet? The war became Corporal Wakely, Privates Marlow, Hendrickson, Mandel, and Rosetti. Even Ryan had vanished. There were two dead men, the bushes, the hillside, and the unending bullets. The five soldiers felt already destroyed.

V

The Attack: *Later.*

Adjust the range, compute the elevation; set the fuse, open the breech and slide in the cool smooth shell. "Number one gun ready." "Number two ready. Three ready; four." "Number one, fire!" A great blossom of smoke with a scarlet pistil of fire in its core unfolded beyond the slim nozzle of the gun. The carriage bounced and the barrel licked in and out like an adder's tongue. The air cracked; steel-clang of released sound expanding, rending the intangible blue sky. The shell grooved a diminishing wail in trajectory from the shredding petals of smoke-flower toward the unseen, unknown black bushes on the faraway hillside. "Go 'long, baby." "Short fifty, right seventy-five. O. K." Adjust the range, compute the elevation. . . . "Number two, fire!" "Over, to the left." "Number three." "Very good. Twenty rounds, rapid." . . .

Ah-h-h-h as the shells mangled the bushes; the bushes obscured in spouts of brown soil and spume of smoke-spray. The voices of the hot guns snarling wildly out of the welter of dirt and twigs and smoke, spitting and hissing like serpents trampled underfoot; all at once quiet. Men emerged from the empty field, miraculous ranks of squads and platoons, loping up the hill. Only one gun firing, now, and that without purpose, in hopeless desperation under the pressure of despairing fingers. The figure of Ryan arose close to the tall sailbush, his arm cocked like a thin lever, sweeping forward, releasing the grenade in a high arc terminated in clamor of sundering iron. The squad ran up the slope and the guns were silent.

In the shell holes the burned earth smouldered. The hilltop was barren, smoking, the earth smelling no more of soil and weeds and grass, the earth

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smelling of gases. The men passed over the bare crest, circling the gaseous craters, glancing at the dead gunners sprawled over their broken guns; not hating them or thinking of their having been alive and full of rage and terror twenty minutes before, but complacently satisfied, breathing easily again, returning to the conventional universe of the war, collecting, reassured by the sight of many men in view, advancing, performing the same actions, each man clad in the same manner, bearing the same sort of rifle. They were no longer isolated figures shocked into impotence by the machine-guns. The whole battalion moved across the level plateau toward the distant road with its spaced poplar trees like a road leading up to the manor-house of a rich estate.

The platoon sergeant, Tex Rommel, a cow-puncher, tall and lean, with a soft voice and steady blue eyes, came up to Perc.

"Any one hit, Perc?"

"Burt and Jackson both killed."

"Too bad. That's eight dead in the platoon."

"We got out too far in the first rush. There was nothing to do but stay there."

All the rest of the morning the line went slowly forward. The Germans were in retreat, going away so fast that no further contacts were made. At noon time the reserve regiment of the brigade took the lead and the advance became a pleasant stroll through the lovely country north of the Marne. The day dragged and the squad was bored and irritable with hunger.

VI

The Wounded: *Noon.*

Each one encased in his own pain; each one carrying tenderly his suffering body; each one withdrawn from the world, no longer aware of the earth or any of its forms: the sun gone from the sky, the sky receding like mist blown off by the wind, the solid hills impalpable as the non-existing space; everything withdrawn but the endless road where they trod carefully, so as not to disturb more than necessary the agonies they bore. They held their shattered arms like swathed infants at their breasts; their torn faces stuck rigidly upon stiff necks: between the clotted folds of bandage their eyes, blank with pain, stared down upon the crushed stone of the roadway. They went slowly, their minds fastened upon the bullet burning within them; they could not remember the time before the pain began or anticipate a future when it would not be. In trance-like procession, by ones and twos, they passed before the squad, resting on the bank beside the road. The squad stared at them in mild curiosity and diverted the demands of their stomachs by a careless interest.

Most of the men went silently, their ashen faces never turning, but a few, who had been gassed, made horrible sounds in throats where the tissue was being eaten away.

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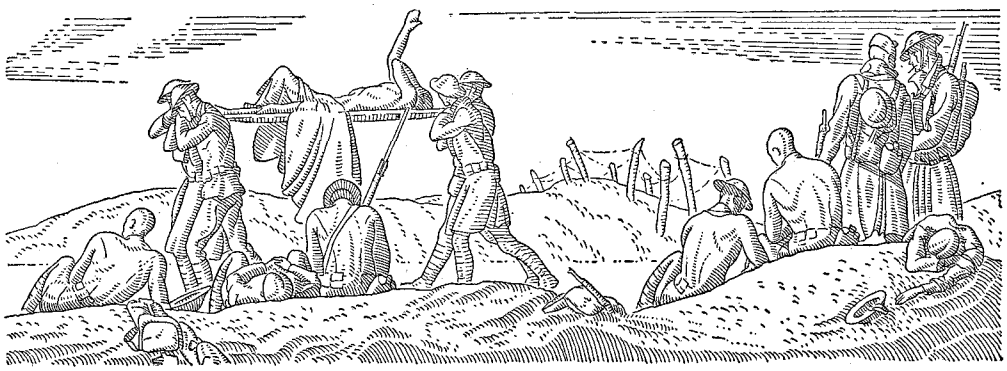

There was a terrifying unreality about the endless pageant, but it affected only a few of the watching soldiers; the new replacements and the nervously morbid like Dad Hendrickson. It took some strange sight like two blinded men holding the hands of a third man who had been burned with mustard gas to rouse the jaded interest of the others. There were too many wounded, too many dead, for their minds to comprehend. Their young bodies, weary as they were, denied the possibility of similar things happening to them. They *might* be wounded, they *might* even die but they had escaped. Thirst and hunger were more immediate discomforts. They had come through desperate places unscathed, why shouldn't luck hold?

But some saw in each maimed figure his own tortured body and sat in bleak fear, listening to the unsteady feet fumbling the hard road, feeling in his own arm the cruel ache of torn flesh and splintered bone, telling himself, "That will happen to me. Over the next hill, the jagged white-hot metal will tear me apart." . . . Dad Hendrickson gazed at the passing men and the sweat stood out on his gray kindly lined face. He wanted to go and speak to them, question them, ask how it felt to have lungs afire with gas and a green froth of bubbles choking your throat. Is it so bad? Is it intolerable? Can pain wrench soul from body, separate brain from viscera, empty mind of all but agony? Here is one. Only a bullet through his hand. He looks pale but his eyes are not like the eyes of the others. He'll pass close to me. I must know. I must. "Does it hurt much?" The soldier, a thin, dark-faced boy, turned, grinning. He lifted his bandaged hand and stared at it impersonally. "That? Oh, hell, no." Was he telling the truth? It is a human instinct to deny. . . . Dad glanced up and saw Perc standing near, gazing at him. The corporal smiled. From where did his assurance come? We are all different. I shall do what I can. But I shall be killed. In pain. Dear Lord Jesus, should I object to dying in pain when you died upon the cross? . . .

"What's the trouble, Dad?"

"Nothing. Those poor fellows." . . .

"Most of them will live."

"But the suffering." . . .

"It won't last forever."

"But the dead," stammered Hendrickson. "So many dead." . . .

All the dead. The fields, the roads, the towns, the woods, strewn with dead. They float in the rivers, they rot in the rain, they swell in the sun. . . .

"We must all die." . . .

"But not like this; decently, quietly, among the things we know; our friends about." . . .

The boy stood listening, his head bent toward the older man, the rim of his helmet circling his young face like an iron halo, without splendor. He thought of the dead men in ditches, under hedges, in cellars and no cry of protest arose in him. He thought of the suf-

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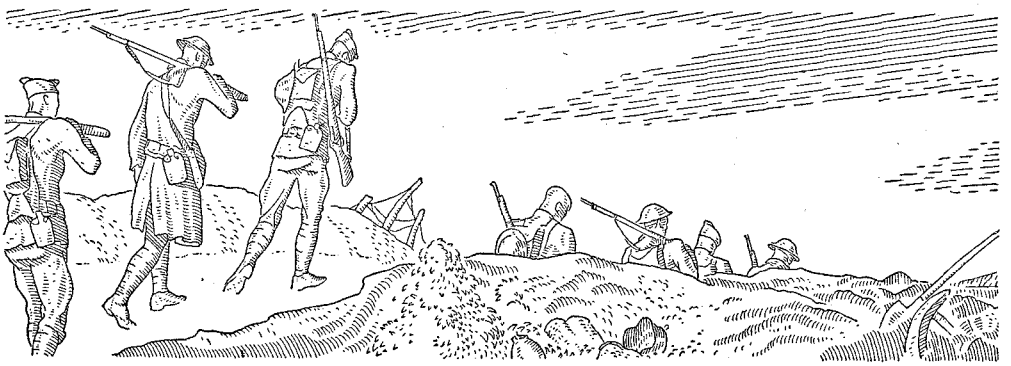

fering, the anguish radiating from each of these decaying things that once walked and planned and aspired and laughed, the invisible waves of heart-ache spreading in all directions, all over the world, ending finally in some village, town, city, farm, mountain hut where it awoke sorrow in man or woman, wife or mother, sister, father. Even so the war seemed to him neither good nor bad but merely the war. His eyes contemplated the drawn face of his comrade. There was no exaltation in the moment as there had been when he had felt himself part of the world moving to its hidden destiny amid the clamor of feet and machines, but it did not impress him as terrible. He felt no desire to kill but deep in him was an eager excitement, a longing to find out what lay before. He did not want to die; he wanted to return; only the things to which he wanted to return were far away, nebulous. Here, where he stood, was reality. At least it seemed so at the instant. It was uncomfortable, terrifying, perhaps, but it could be touched; its essentials lay bare, unmistakable, easy to grasp. He was alive. That was so important as to cause all else to appear irritating, irrelevant. In a vague fashion he sensed himself at grips with the very core of life, where he knew there was no need to ponder intangibles, to vex his mind with the mystical beyond. . . .

He raised his eyes, attracted by a shrill howl, the sound of an animal in pain. Four men were carrying a stretcher, where something writhed and howled. Hendrickson shuddered and averted his head. The corporal searched his pockets for a cigarette.

VII

The Road: *Afternoon.*

Perc felt that he had been over this road many times before. It curved, white and dusty, across the folded hills. From each crest he had glimpses of it curling through the valleys below and ascending the slopes beyond. It was the same road he had plodded in wind and sun and rain and darkness. His feet slipped into its familiar ruts, his eyes recognized its habitual color; along the edge were the lead-gray pyramids of small stones, in the ditches the motionless thick water; the high banks were littered with the residue of the war; the pale dust arose and caked upon his perspiring face. He followed the road blindly, his head fallen forward, his eyes fixed upon the ground. The buoyancy had gone from his body and left him tired, sodden, and depressed. All the men were weary.

It was as though all day a great wind had been blowing them forward, a hurricane, making movement easy, bearing them along, exalted by its power. The wind screamed and their blood responded. They abandoned themselves to its tonic force. They felt like men who go out into a storm to ease the throbbing in their veins by shouting at the tumult, sensing the original paroxysm of nature in storm, still dormant in their bodies.

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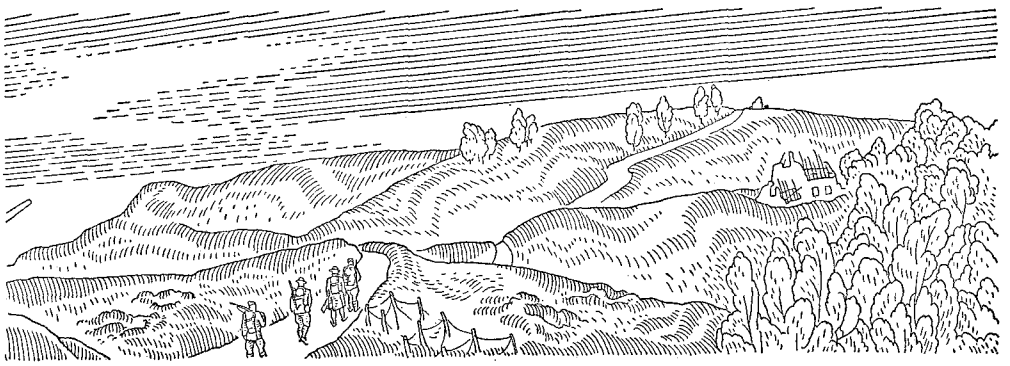

The war-wind screamed, rushing ahead, and in them the original war paroxysm awoke and drummed their minds to fury.

Now the wind had fallen. The vast spaces lay stagnant and only the road went tediously winding and climbing and descending. The afternoon became stale and stretched away monotonously, like the road. Their eyes were nauseated with the sight of the white unrolling of dust and stone, and they hated the blank vistas of static sunlight. The road was like a serpent, crushed beneath their feet, but unable to die before sundown, writhing sluggishly across the repugnant, familiar landscape.

The dreary advance continued, and their depleted nerves were unable to maintain the balance of mind and body so that a little thought collected and, combining with weariness, distilled from two harmless components a poisonous languor.

Each soldier sank unknowingly into the individual pool of his thought and vanished from the presence of his comrades. Their thoughts, dark and heavy and vague, submerged them. The common security of the war-force seemed taken away from them, as though they had plunged suddenly from solid ground into a great morass, where they were drowning, silently, separately, in numb despair.

When they first sensed their release from the immediate necessities of the war, they had felt light-hearted, but the sensation was soon destroyed by the monotony of the road. They had grasped eagerly at the respite and the shadowy thoughts arising from the past, only to discover these memories subtly altered, strangely uncomforting. The shapes of the past, arising in their thoughts, refused to assume the clear reality; they were like phantoms, haunting the constricted passages of their brains; the forms were never complete, but lay in fog-shrouded regions, distracting, nebulous, distant. . . . I will think of my father's house at morning with hoarfrost on the sere grass and mist arising from the Chesapeake waters. I can see the pale sheen of frost but not the house; the pallid mist but not the gray, motionless water. I'll think of my father standing before the fire, his hands clasped behind his back, his head bent, his beard white and close clipped. I can see him, but not the expression of his face, his kind eyes and grave smile. I'll think of God. I can't see Him. I can't see Him. Only the road. . . . Well, I wish I was back shootin' pool at Farley's Cigar Store with the old crowd. I'd like— Well, I wish I was. Well— Oh, well. . . . Look, that was the life, see. I'll remember how it felt to get into bed with French Rosie every night, see. Gees, I don't see why the hell I can't remember how it felt. I've got to get back soon and see. Look, I guess it don't matter if I don't remember how it felt. There ought

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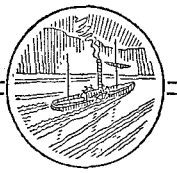

The Legacy of Israel

By LLOYD C. DOUGLAS

A minister calls upon American Christianity to cast loose from the gloomy mythology of the early Hebrews. The church's failure to hold modern youth is, he believes, attributable to this sombre and savage background. Zeus had his virtues, too.

A SCHOLARLY rabbi had spoken to us brilliantly and at length on modern trends in religion. Adam had been rated a mythological character, Abraham had turned out to be a synthesis of three or four ancient sheiks, Joseph's account with Egyptian history was found overdrawn, and the Ten Commandments were generously and correctly conceded to Hammurabi.

On the way out, a substantial friend of mine, who had been brought up on the good old-time religion in a very conservative church, said to me with a grin: "Seems like we're all Israelites now—except the Jews."

Protestant Christianity, as interpreted on this continent, is just beginning to realize how heavy an inheritance tax we have been paying on our legacy from the Hebrews. To the utter neglect of all the broad and beautiful streams of classic culture which might have enriched our religion, the atlas of North American Protestantism lists only one river tributary to the main current of our Christian faith—the Jordan, that smug little creek ambling through Jewry to nourish a lake so exclusive it denies hospitality even to the clam.

In fairness to our more liberal pulpits it must be admitted that they have made an occasional appreciative reference to our religious heritage from other than Hebraic sources, but the will has never been probated by orthodoxy.

From our early colonization days until the Monroe Doctrine was about to be relegated to the apocrypha of our political scriptures—during which extended period America sat snug as a snowbound family of well-provisioned pioneers about an adequate hearth—the tribal religion of "the peculiar people" not only satisfied the wistfulness of the pious but stirred the imagination of all immigrants. The long, hard, hungry treks of the liberty-questing Hebrews were so uncannily like their own that a spiritual kinship with Israel seemed inevitable.

Now that we, whether by necessity or choice, have become somewhat cosmopolitan of mood, the cherished idyls of sequestered little Canaan yellow on the top shelf of the library in most American homes—a fact made lamentable only because the gospel has been inseparably bound to that early Hebrew minstrelsy with a ligature as vital and tragic as that which guaranteed the intimacy of the Siamese twins.

European Christianity had never concerned itself greatly with the history of the Israelites, much less with their mythology. The Church was always too busy expanding her own Pantheon for

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the accommodation of a growing family of potent saints, most of whom were approximately contemporaneous, to make an excursion back to Hebron and Jericho in search of additional themes for her sculptors. Nor was the character of the Jew—as exhibited in Italy, Germany, France, and Spain, where for a thousand years he took but few popularity prizes—such as to intrigue the Church to reopen the magical springs whence his spirituality had derived.

It was not until the Reformation—coincidental with the invention of printing, the discovery of a new continent, and an unprecedented epidemic of wanderlust—had widely circulated the entire Bible, that Jehovah and His services to His Chosen People loomed large on the Christian scene.

Whoever wants to know the relative superiority of the God of Jacob and the God of Jesus, in the regard of our Pilgrim and Puritan forefathers, should review the homiletic literature of the period. These harassed people were to be pardoned, of course, if they found the Sermon on the Mount a bit too conciliatory for their stern necessities. A gospel of non-resistance would have been a very difficult programme to keep up with, in those days, and nobody blames them if they consulted the books of Joshua and Judges more frequently than Matthew and Mark while making the acquaintance of the Indians.

The colonials' trust in the God of Israel was absolute. Providence was on their side, whether they were fighting savages or wolves, fires, floods, or foreign invaders. Nothing so tightened the buckles of their morale as the reassuring stories of the Hebrews' well-warranted reliance upon Jehovah. Had He not opened seas to let His people through, led them with a pillar of cloud and fire, fed them with manna, healed their snake-bites, and made Himself generally useful even to such minor courtesies as the replenishment of empty oil-pots and the recovery of lost axes?

Stern and seasoned Protestants, whose grandfathers had stamped savagely out of the old European cathedrals, pausing only to give some miracle-working St. Joseph or St. Anne a bang on the nose with a candlestick to emphasize with what finality they were saying goodby to all that, now read nightly by their pine-log fires the heartening tales of Jewish saints who had healed the sick and raised the dead, and, kneeling with their families on the puncheon floor, cried out passionately to the God of Israel for similar tokens of His favor.

In their bare and ugly little churches the awkward predicament of Protestantism had been satisfactorily met. At first it had seemed that the Protestants, having utterly repudiated the rites and rubrics which a millennium and a half of evolving Christian worship had brought to perfection, would now be forced to enter into The Presence empty-handed and inarticulate.

Fortunately, Israel had come to the rescue. The rich Davidic liturgy answered all the requirements of the anxious heart that longed to triumph over its enemies without and within. The ancient covenant of Jehovah with Israel was again in force as a bill of spiritual rights. It solved many a vexing problem. Formerly the redundant *Aves* had amply accounted for the distaff heredity of the Saviour, thus imputing to the Virgin a responsibility so concentrated in her own person that it enjoined her worship. Now the refurbished messianic prophecies immeasurably deepened the background of Jesus' lineage, at once distributing among forty-two generations of Chosen People the trust which Mary had borne alone, and relieving the nostalgia of Protestant fingers still restless for the lost beads.

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II

But to explain American Protestantism's failure to recognize and profit by the other ancient religious cultures, on the ground that Hebraic lore so adequately ministered to the unique demands of pioneer days, would leave a considerable part of this strange story untold.

If it should be thought queer, by bookish people conversant with the classics, that so much credence dignified the Hebrew legends, to the total exclusion of all other contemporary mythologies, they should be reminded that very few of the early Americans who gave direction and momentum to the religion at least nominally accepted by the majority of us, to-day, were even faintly aware of the existence of the classic myths.

The affairs of Zeus with the Greeks were securely locked in a difficult language which had no traffic with any but a privileged few whose interest in orthodox theology usually diminished relatively with the distance travelled from the little red schoolhouse and the white chapel with the green shutters, hard by. The more a man learned about Zeus and Jupiter, the less likely was he to be found teaching a Sunday-school class or participating in a prayer-meeting composed of persons who had been brought up on Jehovah.

Moreover, classic Greek literature being scanty enough as to volume, it was important that the youth who had college in view should not be made too familiar with the experiences of Odysseus until required to disentangle them from a chaotic pile of irregular verbs. How was he ever to learn Greek if permitted to canter to it on a relay of ponies saddled for him by McGuffey? Furthermore, only a small minority who learned the Greek myths in college ever took much stock of their spiritual value, being too seriously occupied with the drudgery of prying them loose from a reluctant tongue. Indeed, it is doubtful if anybody can fully appreciate the essential beauty of an allegory he had come by while learning to parse, even if it were written in a language he had had with his milk.

The bulk of American Christians never knew, and do not know now, what the nations of antiquity believed, or with what splendid confidence they relied upon their respective estimates of Deity, or how delightful was the imagery with which they accounted for the ways of God in Nature and in the heart of man. Only the Jews, of all ancient peoples, had authoritatively wrestled with this problem. It has mattered little to us what "the heathen" have thought about the soul. It has been sufficient, when establishing the unbroken continuity of the human quest of the divine, to trace our spiritual pilgrimage back across the Plains of Mamre to the Garden of Eden.

The high school teacher who offers a course in Classic Myths would quickly find herself on the carpet, in almost any American town, did she presume to offer a few enlightening comparisons between Zeus and Yahweh. She has private ideas on this subject, but they couldn't be blown out of her with dynamite. She hopes to keep her job, and she is well aware of the exact dimensions of intellectual liberty as administered by the savants of her community. To keep in the good graces of the parsons and the more militantly devout laymen, she must either identify Jehovah as The One and Only True God, or refrain from speaking of Him.

At this moment, noisily vain as America is over her intellectual advancement, were some inquisitive truth-hound to ask the teacher of almost any Men's Bible Class how it happens that the Jewish story of Daniel, uneaten by the lions,

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should be of so much more spiritual significance than the Greek story of Theseus, uneaten by the Minotaur; or why the legend of Phaeton, who drove the sun one tragic trip, should not be worth studying alongside the tale of Joshua, who commanded the sun to stand still; or why the story of Jacob, upraising his stone pillow to mark the place where he had successfully engaged with an angel, should be thought more meaningful than the story of Pygmalion, who had so thrown his love and labor into a stone that it came alive—he would be gently warned that all such nonsense is not in very good taste in the House of the Lord.

This heretic would not be given a chance to inquire why it was a remarkable thing for Elisha to restore the dead to life, but not for Æsculapius; why Lot's wife, turned to salt because she looked at burning Sodom, should be worth a Sunday-school hour, while the story of Thescelus, turned to stone for looking at the Gorgon's head, passes only for the hoary lie that it unquestionably was; why it should be deemed silly to believe that Arion, leaping overboard from a ship bound for Sicily, rode to safety on the back of a dolphin, but considered an act of faith to believe that Jonah, pitched overboard from a ship bound for Tarshish, rode to safety in the belly of a whale.

One of the curious anomalies of this situation—already hinted at—is that the modern Jew quite frankly concedes that the whole history of early Israel is dissolved in a solution of myths from which no chemistry can ever hope to recover it with anything like scholarly precision. He truthfully claims it is not his fault if modern Christianity has converted the folk-songs and camp-fire fables of his remote ancestors into present-day sermons and Sunday-school lessons. He smiles broadly when he reads in Monday morning's *Gazette* that the Reverend Mr. Holdfast, in last night's illustrated sermon on recent excavations at Ur-Casdim, conclusively proved the biblical account of the Flood. Our informed Jewish friend admits there was a great flood, of course, but he has no notion that his drama-loving forebears had told a more authentic story of that prehistoric catastrophe than the equally gifted Japanese.

The cultured young Jew of to-day stands utterly amazed when Christian missionaries endeavor to convert persons of his race by hammering them with Old Testament hypotheses which the Founder of Christianity repudiated at the cost of his life—beliefs long since outgrown and all but forgotten by intelligent Hebrews. To the thoughtful Jew it is totally incomprehensible why Christianity should be at such pains to make sacrosanct a mass of primitive Israelitish myths which, in his own regard, have no historical value whatsoever and are to be appraised solely on a basis of their merit as parables and allegories.

Orthodoxy's insistence upon the literal truth of Old Testament narratives is completely inexplicable to the college student who has dabbled in a course on "Comparative Religions." Not only is it immediately apparent to him that all the sacred books of the East are profusely ornamented with legends relating to their gods, but he is furnished reasons for believing that no ancient chronicler was more entitled to poetic license than the Jew; for the First Commandment forbade Israel to make "any graven image or any likeness of any thing," thus closing the whole field of pictorial and graphic art, and driving him to the necessity of projecting his ideals through drama and song.

III

Had the early Christian scholastics, in

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assembling an Old Testament, taken these facts into consideration, they might have viewed the Hebrew folk-tales in much the same mood with which they appraised the legends of other races. In that event, it is conceivable that the Old Testament might have been expanded to include the spiritual experiences of all the ancient nations as set forth in their songs and fables.

Had that been done, small children in our Sunday-schools, instead of standing amazed before a picture of Noah's ark, loading its two-by-twos from forest and field in an excited valley crammed with the doomed, could be shown the drawings of a half-dozen Flood myths, any one of which contains as much of moral value, and no one of which is more obviously incredible. In that case, little children would not be informed that this was "God's way" of punishing the wickedness of primitive people, or invited to make whatever they could of "the Lord God" engaged in doing something hideously cruel, but could have it explained to them that this was just the Hebrews' early notion about the cause of the Flood, to be considered in precisely the same terms as the Greek story, or the Roman, or the Egyptian.

Not infrequently the orthodox preacher's endeavor to identify the Jews' Jehovah with The Absolute God leads him into strange sophistries. He expounds the Scriptures which certify to the remarkable instances of the Israelites' rewarded faith in Jehovah, and inquires: "Does this not tally with our own experience, my brethren?"

Well, no—Reverend Sir—now that you have raised the question, it most assuredly doesn't! And that is the chief trouble with any attempt to draw moral lessons therefrom. The religion of ancient Israel can pique curiosity, but it can't fill orders. It encourages people to come running with requests for manna, but it sends them away disillusioned and embittered.

Consider, for example, Jehovah's earliest hand-to-hand contact with His creatures. He comes down to warn Adam against a certain tree. Later in the day, He returns to see if Adam has disobeyed orders. Adam has disobeyed, of course, as Jehovah had presumed he would. Indeed, it seemed up to Adam to do it, for what other provision had Jehovah made for humanity's graduation from the ease of Eden into the rough and tumble where Necessity would give birth to Invention?

Such a story would have been quite impossible in the opinion of the Greeks. Not meaning that the morals of the Greeks were superior to the morals of the Hebrews. But had Zeus been managing the Eden affair, he would have given no hint to Adam about the fateful tree. Zeus would have let Adam eat whatever he liked, and take the consequences. If he accidentally munched into something that made him sick or sorry or ashamed of himself, that would be Adam's own lookout. Perhaps he would know better, next time; or, if it killed him outright, his demise would cause but little consternation on Olympus.

The whole philosophy of the Atonement, which demanded the tragedy on Calvary to pay the debt incident to Adam's fall, is postulated on the theory that Jehovah had made a law He could not enforce without destroying the entire human race, at that moment comprehended in the person of the first man.

Zeus would have waved Jehovah's dilemma aside as of no consequence. If His first clay figure, into whom He had breathed the breath of life, had turned out badly, Zeus, the all-powerful, would have destroyed the damaged product and made another with equal ease.

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Zeus was strongly in favor of letting people discover things for themselves. Prometheus was not informed that he could steal fire from the sun, but would be horribly chastised if he did so. The theft of fire was Prometheus' own idea.

When the Hebrews account for the Deluge, Jehovah elects one household to be saved, though why He should have made an exception of Noah's family when He drowned the world for lack of morals is not as clear as the specifications He issued for the building of the ark, down to the pitch that caulked her seams and the size of the port-hole that furnished ventilation.

Ararat is twice as high as Parnassus, in terms of feet, but Parnassus tops it, ethically. Zeus, impatient with the general cussedness of a world in which "a man was no longer safe in the house of his brother," resolved to drown everybody. He had no plans for another crop of blighters. It never occurred to him to come down and instruct Deucalion to build a boat and save his family while all the rest of the world perished. No, they all looked alike to Zeus, and he was done with the whole outfit. When, however—with all the world under water but the cone of Parnassus which still valiantly raised its head to the frowning sky—Zeus saw Deucalion and Pyrrha scrambling up the muddy summit, hand in hand, the waves lapping greedily at their heels, he called it off. Presumably they had earned their right to survive.

That such a conception of Deity—a God who helps those who help themselves — deserves honorable mention alongside the picture of a Deity befriending certain individuals and races who, for some inexplicable reason, have caught His erratic fancy, seems fair enough to one who wishes everybody had access to all of these fantastic legends, if for no better reason than to help us plat the curve and see how far we have come in our spiritual evolution.

IV

If it is true, as many experienced world-travellers assure us, that America is distinguished throughout the earth for her bland self-satisfaction, her almost unanimous reluctance to concede any merits to other social orders than her own, her candid presumption that she has been providentially led to instruct the nations how to get on and where to get off, may that costly obsession not be partly attributable to the Old Testament outlook on the universe which has been steadily drilled into the majority of our people for the past three centuries?

We came by it honestly enough, seated in our little red chairs facing the gaudy chromos displayed before the Primary class on Sunday morning. Either Miriam was standing on the shore of the Red Sea singing a solo while the Egyptian army drowned, or Elijah on Mount Carmel was making monkeys of the priests of Baal, or Gideon was frightening the Midianites to death with a colossal bluff, or Esther was hanging Haman for not liking so many Jews on the payroll of a Persian court, or Samson was pulling down the city building at Gaza, to the considerable inconvenience of several hundred Philistines.

Some big pageant was always on, and the other fellow was getting what was coming to him for not being an Israelite. The Jehovah of the Israelites was our Jehovah, too. We little Israelites were always right, and Jehovah was still looking after us in the good old way.

Had our teachers read the story for the day in private and relayed to us whatever was in it that might be presumed to contain an atom of moral instruction, as they unquestionably would have been at liberty to do had they been repeating some legend of the Greeks,

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there might have been some profit; at least, no damage. But the Old Testament would suffer no elisions, deletions, palliations, or the healing touch of the soft pedal. Its Jehovah was our God. Its stories were literally true. Its words were inspired, down to the very vowel-points.

It sometimes amazed us to discover that our Jehovah sanctioned the most abominable treatment of war-prisoners, to whom not a shred of dignity was ever permitted to remain, and connived with His People in tricks and treacheries in battle from which they emerged victorious (according to the report) and dishonored (in the opinion of anybody who had ever heard the word "sportsmanship"). He charged them against eating the flesh of any animal that had died of natural causes, but suggested that such carcasses might properly be sold to aliens. We were told that we were the spiritual legatees of this early Israelitish culture; and we read, in unison, "We are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand."

Herodotus says that Cyrus captured Babylon because King Nabonidas had lost the support of his subjects by collecting all their village and household gods to stock his great museum. All the gods were defunct, obsolete, silly, declared Nabonidas. The people did not share his sentiments on that subject and revolted. Cyrus took advantage of the situation and Nabonidas lost his crown and his head.

Whoever wrote the Book of Daniel reports that when King Belshazzar (meaning Nabonidas; for there never was a King Belshazzar) met defeat at the hands of Darius the Mede (meaning Cyrus of Persia; for there never was a Darius the Mede) it was because he had served his banquet-guests with wine in the sacred vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar (meaning his grandfather Nebuchadrezzar) had stolen from the temple in Jerusalem. In other words, the King of Babylon was not brought to book for ridiculing and attempting to destroy the religious faith of his own people. It was of no consequence if he despised the spiritual aspirations of Babylonia. It was only when he took liberties with the holy dishes of the Jews that Jehovah, making a far excursion outside His own jurisdiction, wrote a judgment on the palace wall.

You cannot bring up a whole nation on that type of religious instruction and hope to develop much magnanimity or sympathetic understanding toward other peoples. It's one thing to be patriotic. It's quite another thing to be contemptuous of all the world beside.

V

There was said to have been "inextinguishable laughter" on Mount Olympus, but nobody ever cracked a smile on Mount Sinai.

Very little of the troubadour spirit has ever shown up in our American Christianity. Although the Founder promised an abundant life and an abiding joy, our religion has been singularly unattractive to adolescent youth and that increasing class of people who desire to avail themselves of the constitutional privilege known as "the pursuit of happiness."

Accused of being a glutton and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, the Creator of Christianity stood defenseless in the presence of fanatics whose inherited moral code was an elaborate system of restraints. The Israelites had always tunnelled under Evil and pried it out with penance, sacrifice, fasting, and morbid sessions at the Wailing Wall. Jesus had a new theory. Evil was to be overwhelmed with Good.

But that technic has not been applied

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in our conventional demonstration of the gospel. Evil could not be overwhelmed with our notion of what Goodness is. Our Goodness has always been too sad, too sour, too restricting. The Old Testament, rather than the New, furnished most of the details of our portrait of Jesus. We refer to him as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"—a phrase purloined from Isaiah where he was deploring the defeat of Zerubbabel. We have him "led like a lamb to the slaughter," to insure his essential relation to the shambles. Rarely is he permitted to escape the tragic atmosphere which gloomily overcasts the Old Testament, in whose thirty-nine books nobody ever smiled except to mock.

The whole edifice of ancient Hebraic thought was as if it had been toiled at only on stormy days; rectangularly severe on the outside, sacrificially dour on the inside, its lobby a sheep-corral, its holy place an abattoir. When we fell heir to it, in post-Reformation days, it had not grown an inch or gained a pound since the young Galilean had walked out of it, pushing over the pigeon-cages and hucksters' tables as he strode forth to the outer air. We took it, just as it had stood before the weary tramp to Calvary, with all its inhibitions and restraints, and did our best to fit it to the expanding desires of a new land where there was so very much to make people happy.

European Christianity had been a patroness of all the arts. Our Jewish Jehovah did not care for art. From the earliest moment that we make His acquaintance, He is unconcerned about beauty. Cain brought Him fruits and flowers. Abel brought Him a bloody lamb. He spurned Cain's gift, albeit one might suspect it represented more brains and backache than the other. When, therefore, American Christianity was asked to define its position in regard to culture—music, art, the drama—we immediately knew which side we were on. Art was wicked. At its best, trivial. Granted that our churches were responsible for the founding of practically all our American institutions of higher learning, that fact is of small comfort when it is observed that these institutions have distinguished themselves in proportion to their ability to struggle out of the grip of orthodoxy.

For three centuries, the majority of American pulpits have implored, "Come apart from the world, and be separate!" That was a good old Israelitish idea. Be separate! Don't contaminate yourself with the world! Surely that was a strange appeal to issue in the name of one who had been persecuted for mixing with the unrespectables and who had lived so in the ruck of humanity's roughest problems that from the moment of his birth in a stable to his death between two thieves he was never out of contact with the world at its worst!

Now we can pay for it! The new generation has tossed aside the last vestige of the restrictions and singularities conventionally identifiable as "Christian conduct." The bulk of these rebellious youngsters have never known what the Galilean gospel was about. We were always afraid to show them an honest picture of the audacious Jew who broke loose from the old traditions and went forth in quest of freedom. The Old Testament was always in the way. Jehovah was a jealous God. We had always Him to consider.

When that umbilical cord is cut, which has so long detained our American Protestantism from realizing its independence of the Jewish herdsmen who lived in the Bronze Age, we may have some right to hope that the rising tide of atheism and materialism will turn.

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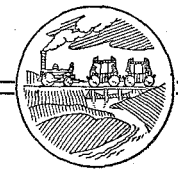

"Sally"

By KENNETH GRIGGS MERRILL

"CONFOUND the man!" fumed Arthur Lorington, as he paced the floor of his room—a delightful chintz-hung room, fragrant with lavender—overlooking Albemarle Street. To have come all the way to London, only to arrive an hour too late!

Frankly, Lorington didn't know whether he was damning The Great Leonardo, pantomimist, whom he had come all the way from New York to sign up for the Odeon Vaudeville Circuit, or whether he was cursing Sam Cohen of the rival Simplex Entertainment Corporation, who had been successful in getting the artist's signature just sixty seconds before Lorington's boat-train had pulled in. By George, that was the way in the theatrical world nowadays—tooth and claw! Simplex Entertainment had never thought of going after Leonardo until they had heard, by Broadway's "underground telegraph," that Odeon was hoping to influence him to cross the Atlantic.

Cohen and Lorington had sailed the same day on rival liners—that much Lorington knew. He supposed it was that wretched fog just off Southampton—which Cohen's ship, with Plymouth as its port, had not encountered—that had really caused his tardiness. Anyhow, here he was, high and dry, striding up and down an expensive room in a very select old hotel, with no possible way of justifying the money he was costing the company.

Ruefully, he surveyed his reflection in the tremendous mirror which hung above the dresser. "Fine picture of a failure!" he grunted. "Swell welcome *you'll* get when you show up in New York!" Beaten by just one hour. . . . Well, he might as well go down to dinner.

Dinner at Judkins' Hotel could hardly fail to soothe the most harried of souls. The soft lights, the soft carpet, and the soft, gleaming, white tablecloth, invite and welcome one, while the epicurean fare, faultlessly served, brings the peace of fulfilment to supplement this gentle greeting. By the time Lorington was sipping his after-dinner coffee in the lounge he was numb with physical contentment. Jove! It was good to be in London again: business or no business, he was glad he was alive! He lit a cigarette and gazed approvingly at the well-filled flower-boxes which graced the windows of the club across the street. Where else in the world were the little niceties of life so assiduously nurtured? And where else would geraniums show to so good an advantage as in a quiet West End street, with the glow of a long summer twilight upon them?

Idly he watched the smoke from his cigarette drift out of the open window at his side. New Yorkers who had never been in London would never believe how peaceful a great city could be. . . . Not a sound save for a shuffling, irregular footfall. Suddenly curious, he craned his neck to identify it.

A short, stocky man, limping very badly, was making his painful way to-

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ward the hotel. In the middle of the street he was, and behind him he drew a small wagon, in which, as he came nearer, Lorington could make out a poor little chap—quite blind—seated at a diminutive piano. When he had reached the hotel, the short, stocky man stopped, took off his hat and laid it carefully upon the little piano, mopped his brow and surveyed the various hotel windows with a cheerful and appraising eye. Then, clearing his throat, he turned to his companion with a blithe "Right-o, Alf!" and, at a chord from the piano, started to sing.

Now all of Lorington's life had not been spent signing up vaudeville acts: there had been a time when he had hoped to make singing his career—before a trifling overcharge of gas during the war had ruined his throat—and he had studied Voice with the same thoroughness that he was now bringing to bear upon his study of the theatre. He really knew something about singing, and it was because of this knowledge that his hair suddenly rose on his scalp and a prickle ran down his spine.

Perhaps twice before had he heard such a voice. Once in Milan, once on that memorable night at the Metropolitan when Zirro had sung the first opera of his American engagement—and died an hour later in his dressing-room, stabbed by an insanely jealous countryman—had Lorington felt this same breathless tightening of the throat. Rich, vibrant, deep, the glorious baritone of the street singer filled the narrow street, overflowed the house tops, and rose to the stars. It was epic, transcendent. Almost stunned, Lorington listened. By what divine dispensation had this artist come to sing "Drink to me only with thine eyes"—the most appealing of all English ballads—under his window? Astonishment gave way to sheer ecstasy. Mechanically, the vaudeville-agent found himself following the flawless phrasing, the effortless perfection of the man's technique. De Borsi couldn't have done the song better—in fact, there was an almost uncanny similarity in the methods of the two men.

But, in heaven's name, what was a voice like this doing out in an open street, singing for pennies? Lorington leaned forward in his chair and observed the minstrel carefully. His first song finished, he was picking up a litter of small coins which had been flung to the pavement from upper windows. Impulsively, Lorington tossed out a half crown, and the singer, hearing it fall, looked up quickly and tipped his hat. Whereupon, looking directly at the American, he sang—his strong, tanned face alight with the song's immortal tenderness—"Annie Laurie."

Tears? Tears in *his* eyes? He, Lorington, crying? Impossible! Why, after ten years of experience with the stage, its hokum and its shams, nothing could move him like this! Incredulous, almost shocked, Lorington wiped his eyes. . . . Probably he had been more unstrung by his failure to sign up Leonardo than he had realized. Yes, that must be it, that must be it . . .

> "Her brow is like the snowdrift,
> Her throat is like the swan;
> Her face it is the fairest
> That e'er the sun shone on. . . ."

No, that wasn't it! He was crying because he was crying. What could any thought of a ham like Leonardo—oh! he was clever enough, no doubt—have to do with an emotion as pure as this? The pathos, the unearthly beauty of this man's voice, would wring tears from a stone.

Leonardo! This street singer was a thousand times the artist that Leonardo was. Why——

Lorington bounded from his chair, dashed up-stairs to his room, crammed

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his hat on and made the descent three steps at a time. There he was! Only a half block up the street! No hurry now. Warily, the booking-agent watched his quarry turn the next corner: with some satisfaction he saw him, little wagon and all, enter a "pub." With infinite leisure Lorington followed him in, sauntered up to the bar and echoed the singer's order for a glass of bitters. The baritone, turning his head, recognized the American and again tipped his hat.

"Nice h'evenin', Guv'ner," he remarked.

Lorington surveyed the man keenly. There was a certain coarseness in his face, at close range, which from the distance of the hotel window had appeared to be unalloyed strength. His cheerful, debonair attitude also underwent a change with proximity: there was a touch of servility in it. . . .

"I enjoyed your songs—particularly 'Annie Laurie,'" countered Lorington, trying to appear casual.

The singer raised his face from his glass, and a cunning look came into his eyes.

"H'I saw yer did!" he chuckled. "They h'orl turns h'on the tap, wen H'I sings 'H'Annie!' Good fer ten bob h'any time, that song—eh, H'Alfred?"

"Stroike me pink!" affirmed his accompanist.

Lorington reeled. Was this strutting cockney the great artist he had just heard? Were these the same lips which had so affected him by their deft and exquisite articulation of the words which adorn Lady John Scott's deathless love-song? The man's voice, itself, reassured him, but . . . but . . . but . . . Striving for composure, he formed a question.

"Where did you learn those two songs you sang?"

The cockney flushed with pleasure.

"Sings 'em like a bloomin' torf, don't H'I?" Confidentially he lowered his voice. "H'I learned 'em from grammerphone records. H'I can h'immertate h'anythink. Why, H'I can h'immertate——"

"Were they De Borsi records?" broke in the American.

"Yer've 'it it, Guv'ner. De Borsi—that's the bloke. Did yer 'ear that, H'Alfred? 'E recernized 'em!"

"Stroike me pink!" muttered the little blind man.

So that was it! The man had simply been born with a perfect set of vocal cords—and was perhaps the greatest mimic on the face of the earth. Good! He'd be all the easier to deal with.

"H'I've a song H'I worked up on me own, too," he continued proudly, "h'an' H'I gets five bob a h'evenin' ter sing h'it 'ere." Nudging Lorington, he whispered: "H'it brings tryde!"

The public house had indeed been filling rapidly—laboring men, mostly, with a sprinkling of solemn-faced clerks—and as Lorington looked about him, one of them, in proper deference to immaculate dinner clothes, spoke up very politely:

"H'if yer don't mind, Guv'ner, we'd like to 'ear 'Erbert sing 'Sally.'"

There was quick silence, a tinkle from the little piano; Herbert braced himself to sing. And Lorington received his second shock of the evening.

It was a dreadful performance—unbelievably awful. Words twisted and tortured into frightful cockney argot, breaths taken between syllables, every principle of singing violated, ravished, and abandoned. It was like some illiterate negro playing obscene jazz on the Westminster Abbey organ. It was almost blasphemous, this God-given voice so raucously raised—like the curses of a passing teamster breaking in upon the hush of a vesper hymn. Lorington fairly winced with the horror of it. Pulling

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himself together, he fumbled about for a comforting thought. After all, the fellow didn't *have* to sing the terrible thing . . . it could be arranged somehow, without hurting his feelings . . .

Breathing freely again, Lorington beckoned the singer over to a table as he concluded his song.

"Have another glass of bitters on me," he said pleasantly. "My name is Lorington—may I ask yours?"

"'Awkins, Guv'ner, 'Erbert 'Awkins. This little blighter in the dark 'ere, is H'Alfred Jones. We wos in the syme brigyde at Wipers—H'I got h'it h'in the leg, 'E got h'it h'in the h'eyes. Didn't we, H'Alfred?"

"Stroike me pink!" murmured Alfred, fervently.

"I wonder if you men have any idea of the amount of money you could make in America," continued the booking-agent, "just as you are—little wagon and all—coming out on a stage twice a day and doing a few songs. Say, I could ——"

Herbert looked at him coldly. "H'If yer thinks we're starvin' "—he began, then blurted out: "Gawblimey, we tykes h'in three, four quid a week, H'Alfred h'an' me!"

"My dear fellow," replied Lorington, "I'm not talking of small sums. Do you realize I can guarantee you a hundred and fifty pounds a week, if you'll come to the United States with me?"

Herbert broke into a hearty laugh. He saw it all now. Good chap this—buy you a beer and have his little joke. No harm done.

"H'an' we'll go over on me steam yort, eh, Guv'ner?"

For a second Lorington was puzzled, then he caught the drift of the man's thoughts.

"My friend," he said, earnestly, "I'm not joking. I mean every word I say. I am prepared to bring you a contract to-morrow night—which you can sign at this very table if you like—under the terms of which I shall be obligated to pay you one hundred and fifty pounds a week for one year, beginning at once. You will be obligated to go onto the stage, in various American cities, just twice a day—with Alfred here, in his little cart—sing three or four songs, just as you sang them in front of my hotel, and the rest of your time is your own. One hundred and fifty pounds a week, I offer you, for perhaps forty minutes work a day, for the next year. By the way,"—better give the fellow a moment to absorb this thing,—"what other songs do you know?"

"H'I bort orl o' De Borsi's records, h'an' H'I sings 'em orl—just like 'e sings 'em," answered the cockney, in a dazed voice.

"Let's see. That would mean 'Drink to me only'—'I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls'—'Believe me if all those endearing young charms'—and some of the newer country ballads like 'Come to the Fair.' 'Annie Laurie,' of course. Splendid! Just the right thing for you."

"H'an' there's 'Sally,' yer know," interrupted Herbert Hawkins.

"Stroike me pink!" breathed Alfred, loyally.

"We'll not consider that just now," said the American hastily. "I'll meet you here to-morrow night at the same hour—and—by the way, here's a five-pound note in advance to show you I'm not talking through my hat! Good evening!"

And with that, he strode back to his hotel.

Two weeks later, James Otis, president of the Odeon Circuit, looked up from his desk with a wry smile.

"Well, Lorington, I see you're back. Too bad about Leonardo. I had rather depended on you there. We need a new

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headliner pretty badly you know, and I had thought that——"

"Listen, Mr. Otis. You can't fight fog, and that's what licked me. But say"—Lorington's eyes fairly crackled with excitement—"I've signed up an act so much better than Leonardo's that you're going to thank your lucky stars I didn't get him——"

Mr. Otis was not an excitable man. "Yes? What is it?"

"A baritone and his accompanist. Nothing like anything you ever heard in your life. Atmosphere? Say, can you imagine a man with a voice even better than De Borsi's singing in the streets? That's where I found him. Limping along the street, pulling a little blind pianist and his piano in a wagon. Got the game leg at Ypres, by the way—wonderful publicity possibilities there. 'Herbert, the Singing Soldier'—something like that. Good looking chap, too. One of those faces that under the 'spot' will look as though it was carved out of stone. The ladies will go crazy over him. And sing? Good Lord, Mr. Otis, can you imagine me—*me*—bawling? Well, I did when he sang 'Annie Laurie,' and you will, too!"

Not a flicker of expression crossed Otis's face. Mildly he spoke:

"Where are they?"

"Right here! I took no chances on Sam Cohen hearing 'em some night. I tell you, Mr. Otis, you can't imagine how this is going to work up. I got a photographer in London to come and take some pictures from the hotel window, and we can get Jackson to make up the set—old doorways, flower-boxes, and all. Funny thing—I was thinking, just before this singer wandered along, what a wonderful stage setting the little street would make! And now——"

"Let's hear him," said Otis, getting up and leading the way to a cubby-hole across the corridor, where the cigarette-burned keyboard of a battered piano grinned in the gloom. Lorington stepped into the anteroom and signalled. "Sing 'Drink to me only,'" he whispered to Hawkins as they joined Otis.

The little blind chap found the keys. Again that gorgeous voice!

> "Drink to me only with thine eyes,
> And I will pledge with mine,
> Or leave a kiss——"

"O. K.," broke in Otis, getting up. "I'll give you an order on Jackson. Camp right with him. You'll open in Newark, a week from to-night."

Herbert, somewhat disconcerted by the way in which his song had been cut short, looked mutely at Lorington, who smiled.

"That means you've gone over—big—with the boss! Doesn't take him long to make up his mind. Listen, now. I'm going to be pretty doggoned busy the next few days, getting that little slice of Albemarle Street onto the stage, and I won't have much time to spend with you. We've got a fine large town here—look it over. Keep your voice in trim: I'm going to have that stage setting so perfect that you'll think you're back home. Remember, all you're going to have to do is to walk on the stage with Alfred here, and sing three or four songs. Don't worry; meet me here a week from this morning and we'll run over to Newark for the rehearsal!"

Lorington settled himself comfortably in his seat. The usual Newark audience. Nice full house. Hm-m-m, Herbert was going to follow Jim Norton. That'd give him a good send-off. Talking, then singing! Anxiously, he looked at his watch—the Norton monologue would soon be over. Two more minutes. Ah—darkness! A rising curtain . . .

Listening intently, Lorington heard that most welcome of sounds, the involuntary exhalation of breath by which

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an audience signifies its approval of a stage setting. Jove, it was wonderful what that man Jackson had done with no help but some photographs and a little advice. It was so real that a little wave of nostalgia swept over the vaudeville agent: he had really loved the view from that hotel window. It was so utterly peaceful.

The clean pavement, the worn but immaculate sidewalk, the little club across the street with its burnished brass knocker and dainty green window-boxes—everything was there. And how Jackson had achieved his lighting, that golden aura of an early twilight in London, he did not know, but he blessed him for it.

A short, stocky man, limping very badly, was making his painful way onto the stage. Behind him, he drew a small wagon in which a poor little blind chap sat hunched over a tiny piano. Stopping in the middle of the stage he faced the audience—ah, the "spot"! At precisely the right instant to catch the man's rough-hewn profile. Great stuff!—took off his hat and carefully laid it on top of the little piano, mopped his brow and surveyed his listeners with a cheerful eye. Perfect . . .

Lorington looked covertly at the woman sitting next to him. Curiosity seemed to be struggling with pity, and pity with admiration, in her eyes. How still the house was! There was a deliberateness, a calm confidence, about this fellow that seemed to quiet people. He not only could sing—he had real stage presence. Lorington hugged himself with joy: the battle was half won already.

A turn of the head toward his sightless accompanist, a scarcely audible "Right-o!," a chord from the piano, and the short, stocky man was singing. Lorington closed his eyes. . . .

> "I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
> Not so much hon'ring thee . . ."

God, what a voice! Every word of the lovely poem, launched upon an overwhelming river of tone, flowed straight into the hearts of the audience. There came a feeling of consummation: it was as though these words of Ben Jonson's had at last achieved their full measure of honor. As the last phrase, throbbing with the ineffable sweetness of a flower-like passion, ended, there fell perhaps five seconds of awed silence. Then, like the roar of a mighty avalanche, came applause—such applause as has been heard but three or four times in the history of the theatre.

Quiet, finally . . . "Believe me if all those endearing young charms". . . For Lorington, time stood still. De Borsi! It was De Borsi's method surely, but Herbert Hawkins's voice, under the superior acoustics of a theatre, was proving itself to be even richer in timbre, more poignant in pianissimo passages, more profound when its power was released.

Once more the tumultuous applause. The twilight on the stage gradually deepened, sombre little shadows appeared about the windows and doorways of Albemarle Street and the flame of the geraniums turned to dull red. Shuffling a step or two nearer the footlights, the singer raised his hand as though about to pronounce a benediction—and sang "Annie Laurie." . . .

Into Lorington's trance-like rapture there stole a queer, chill presentiment. It was as though a cold hand were clutching at his stomach. Good Lord! In the preoccupations of the past week he had completely forgotten "Sally." What if—? Suddenly he found himself hurrying up the aisle. Pandemonium had broken loose in the house—the song must be over. Breaking into a full run, he hurtled through the lobby, stumbled pell-mell up the alley, and fairly dove

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through the stage door. Just in time! There was Herbert in the wings, now!

Apparently overpowered by the warmth of his reception, the little cockney was stamping up and down like a madman. Quick—he was making for the stage. . . .

With a spurt, Lorington caught him. "What are you doing?" he shouted, above the din from the theatre.

Eyes gleaming wildly, the singer turned on him. "H'I'll show 'em wot H'I can do!" he screamed. "H'I'll show 'em! H'I'll sing 'Sally'!"

"For God's sake man, no!"

"Yus H'I will. H'I'll show 'em wot H'I can do!" he shrieked, and beside himself with excitement, he pushed Lorington aside, and scuttled onto the stage. . . .

When Lorington awoke the next morning his first emotion was one of shame. Of course he had put in a pretty hard week—undoubtedly he had been rather keyed up—but that was no excuse for what he had done. As nearly as he could recollect it his nerves seemed simply to have snapped when the first notes of Herbert's grisly encore had reached his ears. The next thing he knew he was fumbling at the door of his room. In short, he had run from the theatre like a frightened hare.

Grinding his teeth, he reached for the phone and ordered coffee. Damned coward! Why hadn't he stayed and rung down the curtain, prevented the catastrophe which his panic had allowed to occur? The whole thing was a nightmare. All of his time, all of Jackson's work, all of Otis's lavish outpouring of money—thrown away!

Numb with misery, he lay staring at the ceiling. A waiter entered with his breakfast tray and set it upon the bedside table, raised the window-shade, and quietly left the room. Mechanically, Lorington raised himself up—and a groan escaped him. There, nestling beside the coffee-pot was *The Morning Record*. The reviews! He hadn't thought of them before. But, by George, he wouldn't run from them! Gulping his coffee, he reached for the paper, and with the calmness of desperation turned to the dramatic page. Ah, there it was!

EPOCHAL OVATION AT THE REGENT THEATRE

Those who were fortunate enough to have attended the Regent Theatre in Newark last evening witnessed one of the greatest ovations in the annals of the American theatre. An Englishman, billed as "Herbert, the Singing Soldier"—up until now, unknown in this country—was the recipient.

His third song, "Annie Laurie," literally stopped the show. But the surprise of the evening came with his encore. Great artists, as every one knows, are not noted, generally, for a willingness to step down from the throne, as it were. So no one was prepared for "Herbert's" incredibly accurate imitation of a costermonger singing "Sally." His broad humor, his superb mimicry—how many years must this man have spent, in scholarly patience, studying and perfecting the inflections and tricks of accent, the cockney grimaces of Whitechapel!—combined with his extraordinary vitality, mark him as the logical successor of the Great Chevalier.

Herbert, the Singing Soldier, is undoubtedly one of the great baritones of the century, and, if one is to judge by his single encore last night, one of the great impersonators of all time."

Far, far away Lorington heard a bell ringing. Very insistently—annoyingly. Pulling himself together with an effort he looked vaguely about him. Bell . . . bell . . . oh, yes, the phone . . . "Hello" . . .

"This is Otis," came the even voice of his employer over the wire. "What did you think of it?"

"Almost beyond belief," replied Lorington, "in fact, absolutely beyond belief!"

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FICTION STRAWS

Short short stories—each a distinct type—showing the varied quality of American fiction to-day

Bloodhound

By JAMES BOYD

THE crowd of black felt hats moved from the track.

"Hyer she comes. Hark to her whistle."

"That's good. They tell me with a bloodhound every minute counts."

"That nigger's had four hours' start right now."

"Reckon it was a nigger."

"It's a nigger. All this stealing around town's nigger work. And what white man would take a purple suit with yellow stripes?"

"All I hope, this dog can smell him. They tell me it costs the town fifty dollars to bring it here."

"Heyo, Will, you got a bloodhound aboard?"

"Sure have. Hyer's the man with him."

"Gentlemen, how you all?"

"Howdy."

"Now, gentlemen, stand back and give this dog room. Too many folks is liable to mess him up."

"Look at them great ears. A man could tie them under his chin."

"Now, gentlemen, whereabouts do we start?"

"Right yonder. See that sign 'Bullteel's Clothing Store'? Nigger taken the suit right off the hanger."

"That dog knows what he come for. Don't he walk proud, though?"

"He's a severe dog."

"They tell me, though, a bloodhound's gentle."

"Well, doggone if I'd love to hear one belling on my track."

"They tell me, though, he don't do nothing but smell and holler."

"That's all right, but, as the fellow says, does the dog say it? Yes, sir, I want to hear it from the dog, else I'm gone right now, I——"

"Now, gentlemen, stand back. Don't mess up the sidewalk. You Mr. Bullteel?"

"Yes, sir. Bring in your dog."

"Never mind that. Bring out the hanger the suit was on."

"You reckon he keeps the harness on that dog all the time?"

"I expect so."

"Sure he keeps it on. How could he stay with him else?"

"Yes, sir, without that harness that dog would fly."

"Watch him snuff that hanger."

"Hark to him snuff."

"Now, gentlemen, stand back."

"He's working the ground now. Now he's whimpering."

"Man, he's off."

"Come on, boys."

"Now, gentlemen, keep back."

"Doggone, he's bound to catch that nigger. He's straining in the collar."

"Oh, man, hark to him. I'd love mighty well to hear that tongue on a fox."

"Now he's hushed."

"Hold on, boys, don't push him. This cross street has him bothered."

"Stand still. Let's us see what he will do."

"There he goes. Round the corner and down the hill. Right for Jim Crowtown."

"Didn't I say it was a nigger?"

"Bill, you and some others cut around ahead. Don't let any nigger leave on the other side. You all got guns?"

"We all got guns."

"Now, gentlemen, stay back. All these nigger tracks keeps him studying."

"Look at all the niggers disappear."

"Nothing but dust and doors a-slamming."

"Niggers sure despise a bloodhound."

"They say, though, a bloodhound's gentle."

"That's all right, but does the bloodhound say it? Yes, sir, I want to hear it from the bloodhound."

"Hush, he's hit off his loss. Come on."

"Now, gentlemen, keep back."

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"If he branches off yonder they ain't but one house it can be."

"Well, there he goes. It's Sis Highpocket's."

"He's straining on it now."

"It's Sis Highpocket's. Look at him jump at that door."

"Stand back, gentlemen. Nigger, open that door."

"Come out, Sis."

"Sis, open that door."

"Take a run at it, Lon. Pull out your guns, boys, and go right in behind him."

"Hold on, gentlemen, till I get my dog away."

"All right, let's go. Everybody in."

"Oh, my sweet God, gentlemens, oh, my——"

"Hush your fuss, Sis. Who you got with you?"

"God is my judge and witness, gentlemens. They ain't been a man in this house since my man went on the roads."

"What you got on under that green wrapper, Sis?"

"Gentlemens, let me tell you the truth. I was just changing my closes to step over to town for my Saturday rations. I was——"

"What man you got here, Sis?"

"Gentlemens, I——"

"Look under the bed, Jeff."

"Oh, my sweet God, gentlemens."

"Yonder he is. I can see his feet. Come out, nigger. Grab his leg."

"Who's got the handcuffs? Nigger, hold out your hands. Anybody know this nigger?"

"Looks like one of them south Georgia niggers that's come in."

"That's what he is. It's them south Georgia niggers been raising all the fuss around here."

"Sis, what ails you? This is as sorry a nigger as ever I saw."

"He's yellow and he's puny."

"Can't you do no better than that, Sis?"

"Gentlemens, God is my judge and witness. I never seen this person before. He must have crope under my bed when I was sleeping. Black boy, don't you grin at me. I'll slap your head in, ape. Gentlemens, let me tell you the truth. This is a mighty big surprise. I declare——"

"Anybody find the suit? Cut open the mattress."

"Done cut it open. Pillows as well."

"Let's get out. Between nigger and feathers I'm about to lose my breath."

"Never mind the suit. We got the nigger."

"So long, Sis."

"Sis, you better tread light. When your Lundy gets off the roads he'll cut your liver."

"Gentlemens, ain't I told you——"

"We ought to tie a rope on this nigger."

"You know what we ought to do? We ought to tie this nigger up and whip him good."

"Road gang don't mean nothing to him. He'll get fat on the roads."

"Nigger, you want to be whipped?"

"No, suh."

"Heyo, here comes Hugh Dave. His face is afire and he's stepping high."

"Look at him raise his knees. That scoundrel sure loves his liquor."

"Howdy, Hugh Dave."

"Hi, boys, howdy. How you all come on? What's the fuss?"

"Nigger yonder been stealing."

"Nigger, you been stealing? Doggone my hide, you ought to be whipped. If they's anything I despise it's a stealing nigger. For two cents I'd lay onto you with a bull whip till you had the gospel in your soul. You hear me? Who caught him?"

"Bloodhound from Twelve Oaks."

"Bloodhound, come here. Raise up, dog. You and me will finish this bottle together. Raise up, dog. Only don't mess up my clothes. They're new."

"Man, keep your liquor away from my dog."

"Whereabouts did you get that suit, Hugh Dave?"

"Taken it out of Bullteel's store. He was gone and I aimed to go on that Birmingham excursion, only I needed a suit and I was drunk."

"You're drunk now, Hugh Dave."

"Then I went to sleep and missed the excursion. And now look at my fix. I've the suit to pay for and I've slept in it already and my liquor is give out and it's a sorry bluegum nigger suit, anyways."

"Doggone if that ain't the suit."

"Sure enough, that's the suit."

"Well, boys, it looks like this is the suit. Nigger, you listen. You can go this time, but mind how you carry on around here."

"Yes, suh."

"Man, what ails your bloodhound that we paid fifty dollars for?"

"You lay off this dog. He's caught twenty-nine niggers and a white man in the last three years. And two of them was hung."

"Looks like they hung the wrong niggers if this fyce dog caught them."

"You call my dog a fyce, you——"

"Now, gentlemen, gentlemen——"

"Well, then, let him lay off my dog."

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"Friend, they is no complaint about your dog. Ain't that a fact, boys?"

"Sure is. A dog can't always be right."

"And it's a mighty good thing for this community—to bring in a bloodhound."

"Yes, sir. It will keep the Negroes quiet for some little time."

"Why, man, this bloodhound has done a thousand dollars' worth of good."

"What this town needs is a bloodhound."

"Well, gentlemen, times are hard with me. For three hundred dollars——"

"Well, boys, I reckon we better be getting back to town."

Always Too Late

By ALFRED KREYMBORG

You've listened to me for the longest time, my friend, and I've chattered on as no man has ever chattered. But the fault, after all, is yours, isn't it now? I'm glad to see you nod at that. It's so long since men have looked my way that a look like yours is a warm wine. No doubt I'm drinking as men have drunk before, but I'm also drinking as *I've* never drunk before. But that's your fault, too, really. To think of any man in this muddy world knowing my name! And to think of his knowing it by a book written so long ago; it seems colder than the grave, and died at birth so far as the world was concerned. Thirteen poems in vers libre written at a time when vers libre was unknown to us Americans. And printed just a little too late at my own expense: when half the nation was writing vers libre. Perfect little things, little nothings, dedicated to le mot juste, the exact word and that sort of thing. Mallarmé and the Symbolists, Pound and des Imagistes, you remember? All so antiquated now, so they say at the cafés. When I came over just after the war, every one was shouting Dada. Now it's Proust and Joyce, Surrealisme, la Stein, Hemingway, and the hard-boiled boys and girls. And I among them all less than nothing, nothing.

There's a new ism born every day and a new manifesto each night. New little cliques battling old little cliques for supremacy. And they're so much the same, so very much alike in time. To-morrow will iron them out and show at bottom how drab they are—as drab as this everlasting Paris in the fall of the year. Like a crabbed face brooding over nonentity, a damp old eye casting a chill through the bone—a chill no skeleton escapes and no house warms. Not houses with stone floors and central heating. You know them? Wait till you've lived in one longer.

No wonder we steal to cafés; no matter who we are or where we're from. No wonder we steal to cafés, though most men hate them as I do. Sooner or later we're fools, we foreigners, and nothing makes you feel it more than gay Montparnasse. Gay as a French funeral! God, how the French hate us all, and especially the land of Lafayette! It isn't hatred, but contempt; not contempt, but stony indifference. They don't even see us—unless we have money to spend. And they're doing you a favor when they overcharge you, accept your money, short-change you. We're millionaires taking advantage of the exchange. Advantage? We're tyros in commerce compared with the French. And millionaires? La belle France is the richest country in Europe, second to America in gold and with scarcely a soul unemployed. And we have millions out of work. Tell that to the French if you can. You'll pay through the nose just the same. They'll cut out your heart for a franc, a sou, a centime—carve you with the same precision they carve a beast or a statue. And chant the entente cordiale from Clemenceau down to the butcher.

How most Americans subsist over here's a miracle. And all artists, so we think. Art in America? Have you heard that one yet? You'll hear it soon enough, and hear nothing, read nothing, smell nothing else. Most expatriates are nearly as lost as I am. What little contact we had at home is gone altogether. And what have we here beyond each other? Talk about porcupines—wait till you've been here

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awhile. There's nothing we detest quite so much as each other, secretly. Let a man achieve the slightest success, let him receive so much as a letter from an editor at home, and we envy him. And you know what happens to envy. America's still our sole audience and the main source of our income: a beggar's income in time and the cause of our deepest antipathy. So we huddle together, day after chilly day, in the grip of an unrelenting gloom and malaise, each a fugitive, each bluffing as hard as he can, and each, with a few exceptions, a growing nonentity. And, oh, how we hate the exceptions! Read in your heart and write, said some fool or other. If I read at all I read anything but that. I prefer Dante's "Inferno" to my own, and he wrote better poetry. Nor do I care to read myself in my countrymen's faces or hear it on their cheerfully cynical tongues. I've given up the Dome, the Rotonde, the Coupole, all the haunts, for this little hole. Montparnasse is the damnedest pest on earth, and nothing is quite so near the grave. Talk about the Catacombs!

A dark little dump like this, remote and unknown, is the haven of those of us who face the facts. Myself, Hal Shanks and one or two other middle-aged Americans. The other denizens are local laborers for whom we simply don't exist. Tant mieux, say I. They give us a look and leave us alone. It's the secret of French civilization. A man is tired, bored or lonesome. Instead of trying the Seine, as he doubtless should, he tries his café once more. He drops at an empty table in a corner and orders whatever his mood calls for. The waiter brings it, pours it out, and vanishes. No one disturbs him. He can read his paper, write his unsalable poem, or vegetate. Wait for nothing or wait for some one who may turn out to be less than nothing. Most of all, we wait for a stranger from home to bring us news. Any old stranger and any old news. Most of all, we prod him to tell us America's still the same unlivable hole, the worst anywhere. You've found yourself in demand so far, haven't you? Rather popular, too? I thought as much. I can see it all over you. That's why Shanks brought you here. Thanks to my star, Hal had a rendezvous and left you with me. But he'll be back, he'll be back. Poor old Shanks. He knew I'd be the last to introduce you to Montparnasse. I'm as safe as Gibraltar. And so you're an editor—fancy that now. No, don't look at me *that* way. I haven't written a line in years I haven't destroyed. You're as safe as Gibraltar, too.

I'd better take coffee this time. Or I'll be saying things I shouldn't be saying. You don't mind?—thanks. Garçon! Deux cafés natures! Natures—oui! Why must I say everything twice in French? That's another trick of theirs. But he'll leave us alone again. Are you sure you've nothing better to do? You'll wait till Shanks returns? Thanks ever so much. Poor old Hal, he'll be back all right. He's never destroyed a line and yet—you must know how it is. He sells a thing now and then—to the minor magazines. And once he had a letter from Mencken. But what does it all amount to? You liked his novel about Nebraska? So did I, ten years ago. But who wants to hear about the prairies now? Willa Cather's done them brown enough. Shanks, to tell the truth, longs for the wide-open spaces. Can you imagine?

I'm from the Middle West, too, but you won't hear me moaning for Fort Wayne, Indiana. I don't blame you for laughing. But you can laugh at Chicago, too—or New York, for that matter. I tried them both and then London. It's a long tale I can tell in three words: wind, fake, fog. The wind blew me out of Chicago, the climbers downed me in New York, and our patronizing forefathers froze me out of London. It happened so long ago, it's as if it never happened. Buried with Rome, etcetera. I don't feel a thing—not even resentment—least of all that. Let's agree I'm a failure. But if I'd had some success, no matter where, that would have been twice as bad. Haven't I seen men trying to dine on a crust of success turned mouldy? Ye gods, what bitterness! Worse than the worst failure. No one can describe how it feels to rely on a past so swiftly forgotten. And so swiftly buried by the younger generation. Wait till you meet some of our middle-aged relics. And you the editor of even a small magazine! You laugh at that, too? I hope you won't forget how to laugh. You'll need it soon enough, sir. It'll be your only defense.

Fancy your knowing my name when Shanks introduced us. Not *the* Alexander Clay who wrote—you said that, didn't you? And you're nodding again. Like a benevolent Buddha. No wonder I've been drinking my head off. No wonder I need coffee now. If I rave on, I, the shyest of people, it must be to stave off breaking the grandest illusion I've ever known. It's as if some one had come to the Catacombs over which I've lived so long in the Place Denfert Rochereau. It's as if he singled me out among the dead of the centuries, and bade me not to stop lest the least cessation of speech thrust me back into limbo. It's as if, really as if, I were Lazarus. And yet,

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no. I'm not as distinguished as that, nor the occasion so unique. But you, sir, you're absolutely unique, though I never heard your name before nor read your magazine. Let Paris pass me by as she's always passed me by. Let the perennial harlot go to her assignations. I ask no more of life than this one afternoon.

For once in my life something has happened in time. For once in my life I've not been too late, or a little too late. I've had my hour in the sun, though the sun's nowhere in sight. You'll forgive me for raving on. You've not said a word, not a real word so far. You must see how it is. Always in the past, I've been the silent one. Over and over, others have stolen all the talk. But what have I been talking about that differs from theirs? Little enough, you'll see. You really don't mind? You don't mind if this sounds like an old ballad sung in the streets or the new blues over the radio? Trite and sentimental? Awfully sentimental? I wish I could stave it off—save you from it all—oh, how I wish——

There's Shanks! Glaring in from the street, don't you see? Poor old duffer—he's brought his manuscript case. The girl? He's got to get rid of her first. And there's only one way to do that, as we've all found out. He'll pay through the nose twice over. What's she looking at *me* for? The same tale, continued. Another page out of Balzac. One more verse by Verlaine. Wait till you've been here awhile. Poor old manuscript case! Battered hulk bulging with hope. That's for you, sir. No, I can't stay. Thanks, ever so much. I've got a date with solitude. I'll go out the back way—the back way. Will it never stop raining? Au revoir. If I never see you again, don't mind what I said. It doesn't mean a thing—not a thing. So long.

The Man Who Had Two Stars

By JOHN HERRMANN

Bruce Walker was the Pullman conductor on duty on the visiting Queen's special train leaving Philadelphia for a trip to the Western States.

Walker had been in the service for a number of years and had just been given his second gold star for continuous faithful service to the railroad company. He was proud when two gold stars were on his sleeve and he was glad that he had stayed with the company and not gone to sea as a steward on the *Majestic* the year before when the job had been offered him.

He had always wanted to go to sea, but it was better to stay with a good job when you had one, and there were disadvantages in going to sea besides that. Walker wasn't married, but he had gotten to be just like one of the family in the Philadelphia boarding-house where he lived when he was back from his regular Chicago run.

The landlady and her husband always liked to have Bruce back with them, and they said themselves that he was just like one of the family. Bruce liked this and it would have been hard for him to go to sea and leave these people behind. But he had a battle in himself there too, because he had the English love of the sea from his mother and father.

It was only the steady habit of his job as Pullman conductor and the steady habit of life there at the boarding-house where he was really one of the family that kept him from going to sea when he finally got a chance to ship himself as a steward on the *Majestic*. He had been talking about it for years, and finally a man he had talked to about his love of the sea and his desire for a good job on a passenger-ship wrote to him in care of the railroad company that he could have a job on the *Majestic*. Bruce couldn't place the man for a while from his letter, and then he remembered the passenger who had told him he would look out for a chance for him on some ship. The passenger was an officer in a steamship line and he hadn't forgotten Bruce.

But Bruce decided not to take the job. He had gotten used to the life of a Pullman conductor and he had one of the best runs in the country, and besides he had a place to live that

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was really home. He was practically one of the family there in the boarding-house. And he had two gold stars for service to the railroad company and he had gotten a small raise with the second star.

Five years before that time it would have taken him about two seconds to start getting ready to take the job of steward and go off to sea. But things were going well in his life, and even though he was a bit thoughtful about it, he really didn't give the offer much consideration. All he said was that if it had come a little sooner, maybe before he got his second star, he might have taken it. He said also that it was mighty fine of the man to remember him and actually get the job for him. He said he had talked to so many people that way, and several of them had said they would look out for a job for him aboard some ship, but this man was the first man who had actually done what he had said he would. Bruce Walker was grateful and he would have taken the offer but that he was getting ahead there on the railroad and he thought he had better stay in the line he was in, on the run from Philadelphia to Chicago.

Then he was selected to be Pullman conductor to the visiting Queen. He certainly was glad then that he had decided not to go to sea. He told the folks at the boarding-house about his good luck, and they were proud of him and said that it was an honor to have somebody that they felt was a regular member of the family have such an honor given him.

"Well, I've always been a steady man," Bruce said. "It was certainly just nothing but good luck that I didn't go to sea when I got that offer. Why, if that had come even just a little bit sooner I might have taken it, and where would I have been? I really can't tell you how I feel, you know there are times when things happen, and you know it seems you just have to say it's luck."

"I don't believe in luck at all, Bruce," his landlady told him. "I don't at all. I think they couldn't have found a better-fitted man to be on her train and I don't think it's luck at all."

"You deserve it, Bruce, damn it, we all feel you deserve it," the landlord said. "Who'd thought you would be here hobnobbing with the royal majesty? That's pretty good, Bruce; you deserved it."

"You're going to have two pieces of this lemon pie to-day, and I wish I had something better for you," the landlady said.

"Oh, it's not so much, really; only I'll tell you it means a lot to me," Bruce said. "It just shows if you're a steady man and take an interest in your work you get ahead. There are lots of fellows, though, are going to feel pretty jealous of me. But as a matter of fact I'd hate to see her have some of the men on that run on her train. There are some of them that would really just disgrace the company, and, you know, somehow I think they must have known that."

"Well, I think it's just fine," said the landlady.

"You'll be president of the company one of these days," the landlord said.

"Oh, no, nothing like that. But it ought to be a good thing for me, though," Bruce said.

When he was in his room alone that night he got to thinking about it and he stood in front of a mirror and practised bowing. He was getting all ready to meet the Queen. He knew enough to call her Your Majesty and he intended to make a good bow and impress her, so he practised bowing in front of the mirror until he worked out a deep graceful bow with his arms spread out at the sides.

He didn't say anything about it to the people at the boarding-house. They would all be down at the station to see the Queen get aboard the train, and Walker thought they would get a chance to see him then, because he intended to use that bow he had been practising right when the Queen was approaching the door of her car. It would be sort of a welcome bow. He would be welcoming her into the car and that was only the proper thing to do, inasmuch as he was conductor.

When Bruce Walker bowed to the Queen she had just gone down a flight of steps through lines of detectives, cameramen, reporters, policemen, and spectators, and she had been holding her head a little to one side because she looked very beautiful in that pose, according to the press notices, and she suddenly saw Bruce Walker all doubled up in an exaggerated sort of bow just after she had unkinked her neck to be sure and see exactly how to board the train in a graceful way.

When she saw Walker doubled up that way she stopped suddenly and colored a little, because she was afraid her stopping might not have been the right thing for her to do with so many reporters and cameramen around. She thought probably Bruce Walker owned the train she was going to ride in or at least he was some high official, because there he was right in the middle of the two police lines and directly in front of the Queen. She mumbled something that nobody could hear when she passed Bruce Walker, because she wasn't sure what she should say to him.

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Bruce felt very good about the way his bow had gotten across and when he noticed that the Queen was aboard the special train he straightened up and held his head up and looked around. He thought some of the people from the boarding-house must surely have been near enough to see him bow to the Queen.

When he was looking around at the faces of the people there one of the newspapermen walked up to him and said: "Why did you go bowing like that right while the Queen was trying to get aboard? You gummed up the whole parade down there for a minute."

Bruce looked at the reporter very coolly. "My mother, sir, was an English servant, and she knew how royalty should be treated."

He turned away from the reporter and walked to the train. He felt very good about it all and he felt sure his bow would be in all the motion-picture news reels. It seemed then that his whole life had been a preparation for this action in welcoming the Queen, and he felt sure that no one but a born Englishman could have carried it off as he had. At the entrance to the car, with one hand on the handrail, he looked around him.

The crowds of people were pressed against the police lines as if they expected the Queen to come to the train door for a final smile and wave of the handkerchief. They were all looking at Bruce Walker as he turned around and he saw the interest in their faces and felt it to be a tribute in his honor. He was very glad to be alive and glad that he had stayed with the same company. If he had gone off to sea he would practically have had to start all over again.

Colloque Sentimentale

By NANCY HALE

"Do you want another whiskey-and-soda?" he asked.

"I'd love it," she said.

He held up a finger to a waiter.

"Two whiskies-and-soda."

"This is a swell place," she said, smoothing the red-and-white-checked table-cloth. "They've got good liquor here, haven't they?"

"Yes," he said, "it's pretty good liquor."

"I like this place better than any place we've been," she went on. "The service is good and the people look awfully interesting. It's kind of cosey, too, with these little booths."

"Yes," he said, leaning forward to look around the room.

"I like these little red lights like flowers. They're really terribly good taste for a speak-easy. Don't you think it looks kind of cosey?"

"Yes," he said. "I know what you mean."

"I guess we've tried them all by now," she said, with a little laugh.

"I guess we have at that."

The waiter brought the two drinks. He put them down and leaned against the table, a hand on each outer corner.

"Do you wanna order now?"

"You don't want anything to eat, do you?" the man asked the girl.

"Can I have a chicken sandwich?" she asked, smiling at the waiter.

"Anything for you, sir?"

"Yeah, I'll have one, too."

The girl kept on smiling at the waiter.

"French or Italian?" she asked.

"Pardon?"

"I mean, are you French or Italian?"

"I'm American," he said, staring at her.

"You look like an Italian," she said.

"Naw, I'm American."

The waiter went away. The girl smiled at the man.

"I'm terrible," she said. "I always talk to waiters and people. They fascinate me. I always sit on the little seat in taxis when I'm alone and talk to the driver."

"I know," he said. "You were telling me."

"I love finding out about different people's lives," she went on; "I don't care who they are."

"You want to look out," he said. "One of those taxi-drivers is going to get you wrong some time."

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"All the ones I've talked to seem to be married!" She laughed gaily.

The waiter brought the sandwiches.

"I wonder how many chicken sandwiches we've had in the last three weeks." The girl smiled at the man over the double slices of bread.

"Quite a few."

"I guess if all the whiskey-and-sodas we've had were put end on end they'd reach six times round the shores of Lake Erie." She glanced quickly at him to see if he thought it was funny.

"Well, not quite that bad," he said.

"You know," she said, "New York's a funny place. I mean people are always going around with each other for about a week and then getting sick of each other. You hardly ever see anybody crazy about anybody else for more than about a week. I guess there're so many people around that you keep meeting new ones all the time. I mean you hardly ever see any one stay fallen for any one else very long."

"I guess that's true," he said.

"That's what's so swell about us," she said eagerly. "We've really got something. I mean I never get sick of going around with you—and everything. We have a swell time, don't we?"

"Sure," he said.

"We've got so many little things between us, too. Like 'Body and Soul' being kind of our tune."

"Listen," he said, "will you excuse me just a minute? There's some one over there I got to speak to."

"Certainly." She laughed the little laugh. "Hurry back."

He got up and went to the other end of the room. The partition of the booth hid him from her sight.

She got out her powder and lipstick and did her face carefully. When she had finished she looked to see if he was coming back. He was not to be seen, so she took the pocket mirror, larger than the one in her compact, from her purse, and surveyed her face by sections, as much as the mirror would show at a time. She licked her finger and with it smoothed her lifted eyebrows. He still wasn't back.

She didn't want him to come back and find her doing nothing, as if she had nothing to do but sit and wait for him, so she took an old letter from her mother from her purse and read it over and over. She kept looking out of the corner of her eye to see if he was coming.

Finally she saw him standing in the door. He was shaking hands and saying good-by to a man and a girl. When he came back to the table she was deep in her mother's letter.

"Oh, hello!" she said. "Did you miss me?"

He sat down and finished off his sandwich.

"Who's your friend?" she asked.

"Man I used to go to college with." He wiped his mouth with a napkin.

"No, I mean the girl."

"That's his sister."

"Do you like her?"

"Sure, she's a damn nice girl."

"Do you like her better than me?"

"Of course not."

"Honestly, don't you?"

"For God's sake, no."

She laughed again.

"Well, you don't have to get mad. I was just fooling."

After a minute she spoke again.

"I'd like another Scotch."

"Listen," he said. "I've got to get to the office early to-morrow. Do you mind if we go now?"

"Not a bit," she said. "As a matter of fact, I've got to get up terribly early myself."

She powdered her nose again, while he paid the check.

"Do I look all right?" she asked.

"Sure, you look swell."

"That girl you were talking to was just covered with rouge. I thought you didn't like rouge."

"Well, did I say I did like it?"

"No, of course not. I was just kidding." She laughed the little laugh, and hooked her arm through his while they went out.

"This is a swell place," she said as he got into the coat the check-girl held. "We might try it again to-morrow night."

"Well, I tell you," he said, "to-morrow I'm all tied up with a lot of work."

"As a matter of fact, I'm busy to-morrow myself. I mean we might try this place again some time."

"Oh, sure," he said; "I'll give you a ring."

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As I Like It

By WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

THIS is the time of year when many Americans will be making plans for a week-end in Russia; and I only wish they might approach it by sea, as I did in the days of the *ancien régime*. To sail from Stockholm for St. Petersburg in the early twilight, passing the pleasant summer places on the way, to cross the Baltic in the middle of the night, to see ten million islands in the Gulf of Finland in the early morning, to spend a few hours wandering about the fine city of Helsingfors, to reach St. Petersburg in the next afternoon—that was a memorable journey. Much blood has flowed under the bridges since those days and conditions are somewhat different.

For those who wish to prepare themselves intellectually for a visit to Soviet Russia, or for those who cannot go there except in imagination, I suggest the following books, which give essential information. But just as no photograph or drawing of the Grand Canyon can give an accurate picture of that supreme wonder of the physical world, so I suppose the ablest and fairest books cannot give us a complete impression of the most astounding and fantastic social experiment in history.

Yet as every man and woman with any intellectual curiosity would like very much to know what is actually going on over there, I believe that the books I am about to name are as important and as valuable and as reliable as can be found.

It was in these columns that the tremendous vogue of Maurice Hindus's "Humanity Uprooted" had its beginning; and few things have pleased me more. Mr. Hindus is a native Russian and an American citizen; he has spent a great deal of time in Russia since the Revolution of 1917; he has a sincere love of truth with the ability to tell it; his three books should be read in the following order:

"Broken Earth," 1926.
"Humanity Uprooted," 1929.
"Red Bread," 1931.

And here is a further list:

"These Russians," by William C. White. 1930.
"Stalin," by Isaac Don Levine. 1931.
"Soviet Russia," by William Henry Chamberlin. 1930.
"Lenin," by George Vernadsky. 1931.
"One Hundred Red Days," by Edgar Sisson. 1931.

While "Red Bread" is full of interesting individual experiences and reports of intimate conversations with Russian men and women, its chief significance is in its description of collective farming, the good and evil effects of which are impartially yet sympathetically presented. The change from what was to what is and to what may be is summed up in an interesting paragraph on page 369.

> The disappearance of individual ownership of land, the coming of large-scale industrialized farming, the collapse of the village, the rise of rural townships, the growing sophistication of the peasant women and its effect on the nation's birth rate, the collapse of religion and the transformation of the individualistic family—these are the unmistakable guideposts of the approaching civilization in the Russian village. They are rooted in the very principle of the *kolhoz*, and as the kolhoz strengthens, they will strengthen.

Mr. White's book, "These Russians,"

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I have mentioned and described in a previous issue of this magazine. Let me once more urge all those who are interested in present conditions in Russia to read it attentively; it is an honest report by a young American of conversations with individual representatives of various trades and professions.

William Henry Chamberlin, married to a Russian-born wife, has spent seven years in Russia as a journalist. His book, "Soviet Russia," contains 550 pages and is copiously illustrated. His chapters on "The Class State," on "Main Currents in Foreign Policy," on "Revolution in Education and Culture," on "Liberty in the Soviet State," on "The Tragedy of the Russian Intelligentsia," on "Whither Russia?" will be found particularly valuable. He gives also an excellent bibliography.

"Stalin," by Isaac Don Levine, with over 400 pages, is the first full-length portrait of the most important man in Russia. Great wars and great revolutions produce dictators; and perhaps there is no figure in politics more interesting to study than the personality of a supreme leader. Mr. Levine writes with knowledge and with unusual dramatic power. We have been accustomed to hear, especially from our foreign visiting lecturers, that the motto of the United States of America is Speed. But apparently the one hope of the Russian Five-Year Plan is that the Soviet Republic will move faster than we. Mr. Levine sums up the situation neatly in an anecdote:

> In Moscow, there is current a story of a man, all out of breath, running headlong in the street. He bumped into a friend.
>
> "Where are you running?" he was asked.
>
> "I am carrying out Stalin's orders. I am running to overtake the United States."

Mr. Levine has written a thrilling book; every reader will become excited.

"Lenin," a volume of some 350 pages, is by a Russian research scholar in history at Yale University. It is translated by Malcolm W. Davis. The style reveals the scholar's objectivity, his love of accuracy, his patience in discovering and reprinting facts, and his concealment of partisan bias. The book is based on Lenin's speeches and letters and proclamations, and on their verifiable results. Here are two passages, one on page 314, the other on page 320, that fairly well sum up a personal estimate of the Saint of the Soviets:

> It was his very fanaticism, his blind faith in the rightness of his basic political ideal, that gave Lenin the determination required to go contrary to all his sympathizers and supporters. And at such moments he did not fear to stand alone.
>
> Lenin's opportunism, in turn, made it possible for him to divine when the demand and the time had really grown ripe for new tactics, and at what instant it had become impossible to push farther and was instead necessary to retreat and to search for some way around obstacles.
>
> Together with his stubborn and undeviating fanaticism, Lenin possessed a remarkable political instinct which aided him in sensing the rise and fall of popular feeling and even of international emotion. Some of his companions, by their own confession, were held in a sort of superstitious awe of this political astuteness of their leader.
>
> Side by side with the combination of fanaticism and opportunism, another pair of contrasting faculties existed in Lenin: destructiveness and constructiveness. All during the first half of his career, until the seizure of power, Lenin preached the destruction of all surrounding institutions of the *bourgeois* order of society and of the state. But once he had achieved power, he hastened to build a new structure, to erect some sort of dikes, to wall off at least a few small islands in the sea of general ruin and chaos. After the period of destruction, Lenin called for organized construction, which later evolved in the form of the New Economic Policy.
>
> If the number of people killed at the direct instigation of Lenin be taken into account—disregarding those killed in the "regular" civil war—and also the number of people who died from famine in consequence of his economic policy, the result is a staggering figure. It is

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enough to say that the number of Russians who died from famine in 1921–22 was twice the number of Russian soldiers killed and disabled in the World War. If judgment is to be based on the number of human lives destroyed by the government of Lenin, then it is impossible not to list Lenin among the most fearful tyrants history has known.

"One Hundred Red Days" (25 November, 1917–4 March, 1918), "A Personal Chronicle of the Bolshevik Revolution," is a tall volume of 500 pages, by President Wilson's Special Representative in Russia, Edgar Sisson. This is of course written frankly from the anti-Bolshevist point of view and is interesting because it is a "personal chronicle" of the Revolution.

Many Americans and Englishmen, who are well read in the Russian writers of the nineteenth century, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevski, Tolstoi, Chekhov, must wonder what has become of the Russian "type"—the intellectual and cultivated man, the conventional Hamlet, keen in intellect and lacking in will. The national characteristic was well described by Sienkiewicz in the phrase *slave improductivité*. Surely Lenin and Stalin are not in the least like that; the strength of the Soviet movement to-day depends on the will-power of the mass of Russians.

It should be remembered that Russians have always loved theory, and have been prepared to carry out a theory to its ultimate consequences. Many years ago the great Russian critic Herzen said, "Russia will never be the land of the golden mean."

The identification of the national church with Tsarism, the anachronism of an irresponsible and absolute monarchy, the sufferings of the masses, all led to an equally extreme opposite, as soon as the new movement got under way. If the Orthodox Church had not largely controlled the people by superstitious fear and had not allied itself so indissolubly with the Tsar, if the monarchy had not been so irresponsible, there would not be to-day such passionate enthusiasm for atheism and communism.

All these books which I have mentioned, those that show some sympathy with Bolshevism, those that are impartial and objective, and those that are conservative, are compelled by the facts to reveal the ruthlessness of revolution. Revolutions are expensive.

When I was an undergraduate, I remember Professor William Graham Sumner saying, "Young gentlemen, if Socialism or Communism ever controls America, be sure that you get on the Committee."

I surmise that only two classes of Russians to-day are happy—members of the Committee, for power is sweet to those who want it; and most men and women who are young and healthy. They have the intoxication of a new order. But as for the old and the feeble, and as for that minority of cultivated and intellectual men and women who love liberty—their condition must be appalling.

The appearance of a slender volume by the late Henry Arthur Jones, called "The Shadow of Henry Irving," makes me regret more bitterly than ever the years he wasted on "patriotic" philippics against Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells. Many times I besought him to let these men alone and go back to his job, which was the theatre. The only thing accomplished by his attacks on his two famous contemporaries was the destruction of his own health and the loss of his peace of mind. Furthermore, he stopped midway in his book on Irving to do post-war work; and it is a book he should have finished. Well, better late than never, and a half loaf, etc. Yet the brilliance and charm of this monograph

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on Irving make me deplore its incompleteness. It is the best pen-portrait of the famous actor that I have ever seen. Mr. Jones's daughter, Doris Arthur Jones, who wrote the biography of her father, has prepared this volume for the press, and has supplied the last chapter from notes left by the dramatist.

Two other biographical works of interest and importance have just appeared—"The Caliph of Bagdad" (O. Henry), by Robert H. Davis and Arthur B. Maurice, and "Whitman and Burroughs—Comrades," by Clara Barrus. Since the publication of the life of O. Henry by the late Professor Alphonso Smith, much new material has become available; and I cannot imagine any two men better fitted by knowledge and temperament to write a biography of the Caliph than Mr. Davis and Mr. Maurice. It would be idle to deny that a reaction set in against the fame of O. Henry shortly after his death; so that many young writers of to-day, who have never read any of his stories, take pleasure in belittling him. I myself am firm in the faith; to me O. Henry is a man of genius, and ranks among our American masters of the short story, with Poe and Hawthorne and Bret Harte and Henry James. Furthermore, I am in agreement with those critics, mentioned in this book, who believe O. Henry's masterpiece to be "The Furnished Room." To all those who used to read his works and have not done so for a long while, I suggest that they reread "The Furnished Room." Mr. Davis and Mr. Maurice have prepared an admirable biography, giving a vivid portrait.

Doctor Clara Barrus, in her book on Whitman and Burroughs, a tall handsome volume embellished with many illustrations, has made an important contribution to our knowledge of Walt's life and personality, and of the growth of his fame. Many hitherto unpublished letters by the poet are printed. Burroughs and Whitman were intimate friends for thirty years; and Burroughs devoted much of his time and energy to advertising Whitman's genius, for he always believed that Whitman was a greater poet than Tennyson or Emerson; his reason was that Tennyson and Emerson were "secondary" poets, while Walt was "primary." I noticed only one typographical error in this big book—my middle name is not Lyons. I am only one, not a menagerie.

Possibly these two biographies are indications that the school of detraction has passed its heyday, and that biographers will now select heroes instead of victims.

The publication of the fifth and final volume of "Diary of a Country Parson" marks the completion of one of the greatest "finds" in history and in literature. The diary kept by an English clergyman from 1758 to 1803, so admirably edited by John Beresford, is worth tons of historical research. The fact that this quiet, celibate parson was so obscure and so content with his obscurity makes his journal more interesting and valuable than if he had been a man of talent or had taken a prominent part in public affairs. To read these fascinating volumes is to live in an English village in the eighteenth century; to know all the neighbors; to share their duties, joys, and pains; to live their life. I believe this diary to be the most important contribution to the social history of England that I have heard of in many years; and what fun it is to read!

Another diary just printed bears the same proportionate relation to Woodforde's as a minnow to a whale; but small fish show the current. Furthermore, this diarist died in the same year as Woodforde, 1803; and she gives us a New England parallel to Old England.

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This is the tiny journal of Miss Julia Cowles, of Farmington, Conn., who died at the age of eighteen. The manuscript is in the possession of Anna Roosevelt Cowles, sister of Theodore Roosevelt, and is edited with scrupulous accuracy and good taste by Laura Hadley Moseley. The twentieth-century flapper probably does not keep a diary; if she did, would it sound like this? Little Julia was a good girl, and her soul was in danger from the wild gaieties of the Middletown night clubs:

> It rains very hard indeed. My Papa just informed me that I might go to Middletown this summer, to school with my Cousin Fanny. I am so strongly attached to my native place that it is not without some regret that I leave it. From these calm scenes of pleasure, into a busy crowd of extravagant people. I have been forewarned of my danger. My Mama is something unwilling I should go, for fear that the pleasures of the world and its fashionable enjoyments will gain an ascendency over me and raise ambitious views and lead me to the circle of an unthinking crowd.

Two ladies, Clementine Bacheler and Jessie Orr White, formerly teachers at Miss Masters's famous school in Dobbs Ferry, have written a charming biography of Henrietta Gardner Macy, who died in 1927. The book is called "The Nun of the Ca' Frollo," *Ca'* being short for *Casa*. For many years Miss Macy, an American artist, lived and worked in Venice. She was an intimate friend of Eleonora Duse, and the chapter dealing with this friendship is particularly interesting. Miss Macy was a high-hearted, generous, indomitable woman, who gave all she had to those in distress; she got no end of fun out of life, and her numerous letters printed in this book reveal an irrepressible and spontaneous humor. She was untamed and untamable, being one of that large class of women who hate routine, regularity, conventionality, and everything formal and stodgy; and she was one of that very small class of women who will not submit to these restrictions; she made her own life in her own way. The two editors have done well in preserving for us so original and striking a personality.

General Charles H. Sherrill, in his book "Bismarck and Mussolini," makes an interesting comparison of these two political leaders, both of whom he admires. The section dealing with Mussolini is especially valuable, as it is based on personal friendship, and therefore contains facts that cannot be found elsewhere. General Sherrill has a Carlylean admiration for nationalistic heroes, "strong" men, leaders, who are not afraid of responsibilities and "direct action"; for I do not see why that phrase should be applied only to men in the opposition. I do not share the author's enthusiastic nationalism; but I appreciate his skill in portraiture.

Professors Watson and Pressey of Dartmouth have performed a valuable service for school and college courses in modern drama, and indeed for all students and readers, in their series of handy, compact, and convenient little books called "Contemporary Drama," five plays in each volume. The American plays include "Beggar on Horseback" and "The Silver Cord"; the English and Irish plays "What Every Woman Knows," "Mid-Channel," "Justice"; the European plays Becque's "Vultures," Hauptmann's "The Beaver Coat," Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya," Pirandello's "Henry IV," etc. The brief introductions and reading lists for each play are good. I do not know of a better series for reading clubs in the modern drama.

"Above the Dark Tumult," the latest mystery story by Hugh Walpole, is also one of his best. The characters make a

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deep impression, the plot is ingenious, and the style excellent. Although the author seems to regard this book as a vacation exercise, I think it is much better than the more elaborate "Rogue Herries," which is too long.

Recently I commented on the name Evelyn, stating that usually in the United States it is a word of three syllables, the first pronounced like "ever," while in England it is two syllables, pronounced like "Eve." In England it may be masculine or feminine. I have received an interesting letter from R. P. Wood, of Everett, Wash.:

I notice a letter in your department in SCRIBNER'S for June regarding the pronunciation of the name "Evelyn." In England and Northern Ireland, it seems to me, that it is pronounced as a dissyllable, though there was a tendency to sound the second "e" among the uneducated. Evalyn is a variant.

In this connection it might interest you that there is a distinct difference in the pronunciation of this name when borne by a boy, in which case the first "e" is long and accented, second "e" not sounded. As a surname I have heard it pronounced both in this manner and as a dissyllable.

It is odd also to observe the pronunciation of the name, "Cecil," when a girl's name: "e" long and accented; but when a boy's: "e" short and accented.

These distinctions were in vogue in my boyhood days, but, alas, that period is in the distant past.

Doctor Jas. J. Walsh, of New York, brings to my notice a word I have never before heard—"stuckering." He says, "It is the Anglo-Irish expression for going to the neighbors about mealtime so as to be asked to share in it. It was used particularly of children. Most of these supposed Irishisms are really Elizabethanisms."

I am frequently astonished that British scholars, living in London, do not use material right at hand. In the London *Times Literary Supplement* for May 14, 1931, there is a two-column review of a new edition of Browning's poem "Pauline," edited by N. Hardy Wallis, and published by the University of London Press. One of young Browning's allusions to Shelley is quoted:

I ne'er had ventured e'en to hope for this,
Had not the glow I felt at His award,
Assured me all was not extinct within.

The London *Times* reviewer writes, "Mr. Wallis, in his commentary, is strangely misled by the capitals into hesitating whether Browning is thinking of the Deity or of Shelley." Then the reviewer, by a rather elaborate consideration of another passage in the same poem, arrives at the correct conclusion that "His award" means the award of fame to Shelley. But neither Mr. Wallis nor *The Times* reviewer needed to guess or to be in doubt. In the South Kensington Museum there is a copy of "Pauline" with marginal notes in the handwriting of John Stuart Mill, answered by notes in the handwriting of Browning.

Here is what Mill wrote on the passage

"Had not the glow I felt at His award."

What does this mean? *His* opinion of yourself?—Only at the fourth reading of the poem I found out what this meant.

And Browning wrote:

The award of fame to him. The late acknowledgment of Shelley's genius.

A walk to the South Kensington Museum would have saved both the editor of the poem and the London *Times Literary Supplement* a good deal of trouble.

From Mrs. E. P. Howard, of New Bedford, Mass.:

I read the April copy of SCRIBNER'S Saturday evening and was much amused at the new (to me) name for spring peepers, given you by Mrs. Whiting (p. 443). I was more amused when the Sunday paper came! I am enclosing

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an article published by the New Bedford Sunday *Standard* for April 12. You may enjoy it. There seem to be thousands of these wee things around here.

PINKLETINK SINGS IN BOWL

Vineyard Haven, April 11—The voice of the pinkletink is abroad in the land.

From every swamp and bog, from every wayside pond his high-pitched piping notes arise proclaiming it is spring. A veritable hallelujah chorus of blended voices sounds across the evening like the jangle of musical sleigh bells. The pinkletink has spring in his heart, and puts his heart into his accents.

Mabelle P. Benson, 11, has a pet pinkletink. As far as it is known, no one else on Martha's Vineyard ever had one. In fact no one in southeastern Massachusetts has ever been known to have one. Thornton W. Burgess, who calls all nature's children by their first names, admits he has never seen one. The pinkletink to the majority of mankind is a voice and nothing more.

In very simple terms, Mabelle describes her feat: "I heard him, I saw him and I grabbed him."

Once grabbed, Mabelle held him tightly in her fist and ran to the house. She got a goldfish bowl which had been gathering dust since its last inhabitants gave up their gilded ghosts, put in a pint of mud, a quart of water and some stones and moss, and introduced the pinkletink to his new home.

He remained plunged in silence and meditation for about 24 hours and then, no longer able to contain himself, piped up his peeps to the great delight of the Benson family. Since then he has announced the advent of each new day with several solo numbers between 5:30 and 6 A.M., has joined in with any other music played or sung throughout the day and piped a lullaby to the daylight as the evening shadows fall.

He continues extremely lively and appears to be in a very cheerful frame of mind. He would turn goldfish green with envy by the ease with which he can walk right up the sides of bowl and rub his nose on the brim. Only a strip of cheesecloth stretched across the top of the container keeps him captive. The Bensons discovered the necessity of covering the bowl almost immediately.

As aforesaid, he looks like a frog. Stretched out, he measures perhaps three-fourths of an inch. He is a rather light greenish-brown in color. He has protruding brown eyes, visible ears, and baggy black throat that puffs out like a toy balloon when he's vocalizing. His feet are slightly webbed, though not entirely. When he hits high C, his throat is inflated to half the size of the whole pinkletink. When he stops, it collapses like a punctured tire.

"When the radio is going or when some one is talking or whistling he hollers," Mabelle explained. He is usually ready to trill all the notes of the scale when Mabelle accompanies him on her violin.

The New York *Herald Tribune* for April 17 had an editorial "Pinkletinks on the Vineyard."

New members of the Faerie Queene Club are Edna Mae Kleinfall, seventeen years old, a senior in the High School in Spring Valley, Ill. She began the poem January first of this year, and finished it on the nineteenth. Helen May Matheson, a freshman in the University of California, has recently read the entire poem. Jack Ingold, who read it through last autumn, and Marjorie Redfern Wehmer also join the Club.

And now, through a clipping from the English newspaper, the Manchester *Guardian*, which was sent me by a friend, I discover that membership in the F. Q. Club is so highly prized in Great Britain that it is leading to crime. Here is the item:

THEFT OF "FAERIE QUEENE"

At the Manchester Assizes on Friday Percy Clutton Walker (30), motor-driver, and Reuben Ashworth (27), wireless electrician, pleaded guilty to sacrilege by breaking into Cartmel Priory and stealing a folio edition of Spenser's "Faerie Queene," and James Pyke (45), grocer, pleaded not guilty to counselling and procuring the commission of the offense and to harboring his coprisoners.

Ashworth was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment in the second division, Pyke to five months' imprisonment in the second division, and Walker was bound over for two years in the sum of £10.

As showing that knowledge of and interest in prize-fighters is not confined to male enthusiasts, I will narrate the

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following incident. I was on a dining-car when a man passed through who seemed seven feet high. I spoke to the conductor, saying, "That man is about as tall as Carnera." A lady, unknown to me, spoke up positively from her place at a table, "Why, he is much taller than Carnera!"

Books mentioned in this article are named below, with publishers.

"Broken Earth," by M. Hindus. International Publishers. $2.50.
"Humanity Uprooted," by M. Hindus. Cape and Smith. $3.50.
"Red Bread," by M. Hindus. Cape and Smith. $3.50.
"These Russians," by W. C. White. Scribners. $3.
"Stalin," by I. D. Levine. Cosmopolitan. $3.50.
"Soviet Russia," by W. H. Chamberlin. Little, Brown. $5.
"Lenin," by G. Vernadsky. Yale. $3.
"One Hundred Red Days," by E. Sisson. Yale. $5.
"The Shadow of Henry Irving," by H. A. Jones. Morrow. $2.
"The Caliph of Bagdad," by Davis and Maurice. Appleton. $3.50.
"Whitman and Burroughs," by Clara Barrus. Houghton Mifflin. $5.
"Diary of a Country Parson," edited by J. Beresford. Vol. 5. Oxford. $4.25.
"The Diaries of Julia Cowles," ed. by L. H. Moseley. Yale. $2.
"The Nun of the Ca' Frollo," by Misses Bacheler and White. Wm. Farquhar Payson. $5.
"Bismarck and Mussolini," by C. H. Sherrill. Houghton Mifflin. $3.50.
"Contemporary Drama," edited by Watson and Pressey. Scribners. $1.25 each.
"Above the Dark Tumult," by H. Walpole. Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.

New England Homesteads

By Margaret Emerson Bailey

These homesteads are plain-spoken, built by men
Who trusted in their handiwork to teach
A meaning held by marriage, one that speech
Halted at uttering. A woman when
She saw the house built for her, met its face
As honest as the day's, no ornament
Save dignity to mark its high intent,
Knew well that two could never fill the place
That testified to love. And though she spoke
Of slips of peonies she meant to bring
For blooming by her kitchen door in spring,
Her mind made answer to the hand-hewn oak
That rose to rafters. Hers, to take or leave,
The implication of each generous eave.

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Call It a Day

(Continued from page 193)

to be plenty French Rosies in these burgs. This damn road oughta go to some burg where there was some wimmen. . . . Then I hit him smack on the jaw and, then— There was a crowd and somebody yelled "Cops!" So I pasted him. That cop at Broad and South Streets. What was his name? He was a good guy. If I had my old Mack truck to drive along this lousy road. . . . It doesn't really matter if I don't remember. I don't care to remember. Only things come back, half-alive. Then I feel only half-alive. You can't feel that way. You've got to be all alive to stand the war. You must feel the way I felt last night; this morning. Then you can throw yourself into the war and not recall the half-remembered things— The French make fine roads but they all look alike. . . . O Dio mio, my head feels crazy. I try thinking. O Signor Dio, have mercy on Emmanuel Rosetti. My head is full of bright things. I must sleep. I must rest. I can't walk no more thees terrible road. My head. My road. O Signor Road save the head of . . . the soul . . . of road . . . the road feels crazy. It runs in my head and I can't remember. . . . The road plunged abruptly into the cool shadow of a hillside. "Fall out!" "Five minutes." "Fall out on the right." Inert, they squatted beside the road, automatically seeking for cigarettes.

The brief rest revived them. They dragged themselves out of the slough of the past and sought the firm present. The need of talk arose in them. They gathered together and discussed the war. They did not want the war returned but they were uneasy through having lost the only reality they possessed. For all things had been changed in them. The reagent of war had disassociated everything from its habitual accompaniment. Even the fundamental aspects of the world were altered. Rain, wind, sun, darkness and light brought new associations. They no longer felt the same toward any of these things.

"Ten years from now," Perc thought suddenly, "when I am walking through a lovely summer night, the wind cool upon my face, the stars near by and friendly, the trees murmuring, the night filled with pleasant familiar sounds, a tree will crack, a noise will start alive the forgotten war-night. The sweat will come out upon my body. I'll stop dead . . . waiting for the hidden gun to speak . . . I'll . . . Nonsense. I'm dog tired. It's this damned dreary road, going nowhere."

The road and the afternoon converged toward the twilight. The men plodded into the unseen, approaching evening. The fields grew darker and the road lighter. They ascended a long slope. Now their dead comrades assumed reality and importance; the memory of them returned and oppressed the squad.

"Poor ol' Jackson." . . .

"Poor Burt." . . .

They recalled little things about the two dead companions. The hot, lifeless air was weighted with sorrow. The road led from the old dead toward the future dead. The ascent became steeper. They breathed heavily and the calves of their legs hurt. The column halted. There was a slight commotion at the head where the officers gathered about an unknown officer. Perc noticed the square, sturdy figure of Lieutenant Ellsworth, his legs braced apart and his short arm gesturing.

"Something's up," said Ryan.

At once they felt caught up in the war. The itch of fear began under Mandel's skin. His flat eyes sank back into his sallow, brutal face. The last vague memory of French Rosie shrank out of his mind. Marlow began to whistle, an old tune from the forgotten pool-room days. Dad Hendrickson bowed his graying head. Ryan fingered his rifle eagerly. How much more fun to stick it in a Heinie than to smack some guy on the jaw. Perc walked to the edge of the road. The gathering intensity drove the fatigue from his muscles. He felt alert, rested, curious. His mind was empty of everything but the slowly growing excitement. A whistle blew. The company deployed and moved obliquely, across the hillside, mounting in a long angle toward the crest. At the top they saw, down the long gray-green slope, a town, pale and distant, indistinct in the gathering dusk. The line swung across the hill, circling gradually toward the houses. Their eyes watched the town with bright uncertainty, and, as they stared, shells passed above them and burst upon the far side of the hill. They no longer remembered the road.

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VIII

The Shells: *Sunset.*

On the blank hot sky their sensitized nerves traced the trajectories of the shells. Across the vast chart the invisible graph lines were drawn in sound, and the sound set their bodies shuddering, long before the shells arrived on the hillside where they lay. The sound began in four distinct muffled thuds like rapid taps on a loose drum head. There was an instant of silence when they heard their hearts repeating the sinister cadence of the hidden battery. The thump of their hearts was magnified in their ears; momentarily they were deceived, thinking the four small faraway sounds merely the quick beating of their hearts—then the shrill, faint whining of the rending air penetrated their minds and they said: "Here they come . . . another bunch . . . oh, God . . . listen . . . Christ. . . . Duck everybody . . . keep down, Rosetti, keep down, you fool. . . . Our Father, Lord Jesus." . . . Now the sound rushed ahead of the slim steel shells. It passed the shells on their ascending arcs into the lovely blue empty sky, and dove straight toward the men on the hillside who shivered, clenching their hands, drawing their knees up, pressing deeper into the indifferent earth. It came ahead of the shells like madness blowing a great trumpet whose mouth encompassed the globe. The sound spread and grew and filled the heavens, and the heavens opened like a great mouth of madness emitting the sound. The madness and the sound beat down upon the men, their bodies and minds were engulfed in the sound, the past and the future were destroyed by the sound, their lungs and arteries and brains were filled with it. They felt swollen with the approaching sound. It seemed to lift them above the little mounds of protecting earth to meet the descending shells. Their rifles, grenades, and revolvers were useless. They were bereft, naked, exposed to the incredible power of the oncoming shells. The speed and intensity of the sound increased, it converged to a point just above them and fell toward their defenseless backs. . . .

The shells burst!

Their distended bodies collapsed and they seemed to fall back limply upon the ground where they lay breathing harshly, the echoes of the explosions tumbling about in their brains. Their fingers unclenched, they rested, inert, supine, exhausted . . . waiting.

Before the last white-hot shell fragments had sunk shrieking into the hillside, they were listening for the next salvo. Strangely, their imaginations assembled no picture of the distant battery where the sound began; they did not envision the four sooty guns behind their square black iron shields, like blunt swords thrust out of heavy bucklers, or the sweating gun crews passing the lean shells from their wicker beds into the smoking breeches. They thought only of the sound and the sound assumed a definite shape, an actual substance; it was a great funnel, opening to its apex in the sky above, then turning and contracting, carrying the shell at its descending point. And each man felt the point directed at him. Like enormous hammers the shells struck at them and the blows paralyzed them, broke down the fibres of their bodies, left them cursing and panting and shivering on the barren hillside.

Rosetti, the Wop, lying in the shallow hole he had scooped desperately with bayonet and mess pan from the sour earth, felt the mad sound calling to the madness dormant in his misshapen head. He lay gasping and shuddering, contending with the sound and the terror and the madness for possession of his brain. He tried to think of his home, of his father's fruit store, the smell of grapes and over-ripe bananas, and the sound burst upon the thought and destroyed it; he strove to recall his sisters, brothers, friends, neighbors, the narrow noisy street, and the sound engulfed them; he called upon his mother and the words were beaten down by the exploding shells. The slobber ran from the corners of his lips and he shrieked the name of his God. He cried to his God to release him from the sound and the terror, and the madness ran through his brain, severing his brain from his body. His hands and legs lay twitching in the dirt and he no longer recognized them. He saw the mystical flowers of the shell bursts sprouting black and sulphurous out of the bare earth and the red fire at the heart of the unfathomable blossoms. *"Pietà, O Dio mio!"* The shells came faster and faster as other batteries joined in the hunt. He was shut in by the continuous sound. The blasts broke down the walls of his brain and madness poured through the shattered passages; the current of terror overflowed and bore his soul away on its horrid flood. Nothing remained but the instinctive desire to escape from the no more comprehended fear. He arose and ran blindly down the hill. The squad gaped at him in amazement. They yelled at him but he ran on past the smoking holes toward the hollow where the shells were falling thickest. Perc

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leaped up with the vague intention of going after him. The earth was stricken by a convulsion. Where Rosetti had been, a column of dirt and smoke reared upright upon a pedestal of flame. When it toppled back to earth it disclosed a crumbled mass of blood and cloth.

Then on the dim slopes beyond the town the shells from their own guns began flaming and after a while there was quiet about them. They arose, automatically, and followed the stocky figure of Lieutenant Ellsworth. They were in a garden; stone walls above their heads and broken fruit trees. Apple-trees, thought Dad Hendrickson. An iron balcony hung shattered on a house-front. Through the holes in the walls they could see stuffed furniture, a lamp swinging idly. Marlow saw a yellow cat sitting in a doorway licking her paws. Mandel saw a broken bed. Dad Hendrickson saw a bookcase with books fallen in heaps. Ryan saw the booted feet of a dead German protruding from a heap of rubble. Perc saw the lieutenant open the wooden door in the garden wall and cautiously peer along the deserted street. They were capable of noticing only simple, single things. No one remembered Rosetti. The lieutenant beckoned and stepped through the doorway. The street was bright with the last sunlight. It shone level into their eyes and dazzled them. They sidled along the wall toward the corner of the street. Rifles fired but they seemed far away. The explosions were dulled by the intervening walls. The houses were mysterious in their ruin. It was difficult to conceive of them as houses. They were in a strange labyrinth, following the hunched figure of the officer. They no longer remembered the shells. The war had assumed a new disguise. It wore the wreck of houses upon its face; it crept along the stone paving-blocks of streets. The sound of their feet in the rubble was alarming. They didn't understand the war in this guise. The officer was uncertain; he wanted to find the rest of his platoon. They should have followed through the outskirts of the town but somewhere they had gone astray. It seemed incredible. Some one had failed to keep contact. At the corner he would turn back. The machine-gun bullets came breast-high up the street out of the sunlight. . . .

IX

The Town: *Evening.*

The room where they had taken refuge had been a small store. It stood upon a corner and they could watch four streets. The glass had long fallen from the two show windows and even the framework of the front door had been torn away. Inside were empty shelves and a mass of wrecked counter, rubble, fallen stone, plaster, woodwork, cans, rags, smashed chairs, and unnamable trash.

They laid Lieutenant Ellsworth on a sodden mattress dragged from an inner room and stood about in embarrassed silence watching him die. It was disconcerting to see an officer suffering and they were unsure just what attitude to adopt.

The lieutenant lay with his eyes closed, gasping for breath, and striving not to give way to the pain and fear and wild despair surging into his mind. He knew that he was dying and he wanted to play the game through to the end but things kept arising amid the pain and terror to weaken his resolve. Behind his closed eyes he kept seeing and thinking of the past. . . . Now, if I give way, now; if I break down, now; if I can't carry it through, now. If I can shut all that other out, hold it away from me, keep Mary back for only a little while, it won't be necessary . . . so I will never know again . . . and not remember Mary, and Mary her daughter, my daughter. . . . Listen, you two, I can't think about you, now. You see, I can't. I have to be here, I have to do what I can for these boys. Kids, that's what they are. That snub-nosed kid over in the corner watching down the street, squinting his eyes in the sun and looking for the gun that killed me. Why he ought to be out in the country riding a farm horse, or flirting with the milkmaids, or throwing a baseball. And that cool-eyed kid, what's his name. I ought to know his name. Ryan. And the corporal . . . "Corporal!"

"Yes, lieutenant."

"Thirsty. . . ."

"Here, lieutenant."

The tepid water spilled over his chin and lay in tiny globules on the short, black, stiff hairs of his mustache. He tried to move his head. Perc took his gas-mask and placed it under the lieutenant's head. The officer sighed. Momentarily the pain seemed easier. Then it came again, radiating from his torn chest. The blood poured afresh through the scanty bandages. He tried to speak but froth and blood dammed his throat. Perc leaned forward and wiped his mouth.

"Lie quiet, lieutenant."

He wanted to tell the four soldiers to leave him and try to get back to the rest of the platoon. He felt that he must spend the last mo-

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ments of his life as an officer, taking care of the men in his charge, but the thought was so entangled with those overwhelming desires, with the intolerable pain, that it would not come clear and be spoken. . . . There's Mary, you see, and her daughter, Mary. . . . There's the pale green dress she wore at breakfast, and the thick cream on the cereal, and the fragrant coffee. . . . There are the white sheets on the beds and little Mary asleep in her small bed, the spring wind blowing the night coolness into the room and Mary sleeping quietly beside me. . . . Now, listen, God. I turn them over to you. See, I'm not able even to think about them. I just turn them over to you to take care of. I've got to think of some way to get these boys safely out of here. It isn't that I don't love them. . . . If it didn't hurt so I could think clearly. I could think out a plan. They'd go back safely and then I could lie here remembering my wife and my child. I might live a long while. Perhaps as long as an hour. I could remember a lot in an hour. I could remember the summer we spent at the shore. I could remember how we swam in the cool green ocean. I could . . . I'll tell the corporal how to get them out. If they went back then it wouldn't be so bad if I had to call out, if I had to speak Mary's name just before I died, if I should be horribly frightened at the last and I *had* to call to her. . . . So if you could stop this damned pain for a minute and let me think up a plan for them. . . . If I have to die that's all right. But it's hard to keep on being a soldier and an officer and not be able to think about them. . . . If I could just *say* her name out loud. If I could say it over and over. . . . If I could send these boys all away safe I could just lie here and say it over and over, and then . . . "Corporal . . ."

"Yes, lieutenant."

The officer opened his eyes. He saw the young, intent face of the corporal, compassionate and tender, bending toward him. He saw, dimly, the ruined interior and the two soldiers watching from the corners of the windows. He saw the bent figure of Dad Hendrickson above the kneeling corporal and the vague shape of Mandel squatted behind a heap of rubble. He saw the sunset glow burnishing the torn fronts of the houses across the street. A plan came suddenly into his mind and he raised his head to speak. The corporal bent down and the sunlight flooded the serene lawns of Myrtle Avenue. He saw the stucco and frame suburban houses and the trees along the curving road. He saw himself coming blithely toward number 36, and Mary standing on the step leaning toward him. . . . The plan. . . . The plan. . . . He spoke harshly.

"Mary," he said, "Mary, Mary, Mary, oh, Mary. . . ."

X

The Town: *Night.*

When they turned their heads the night had come. The silence and quickness of its arrival alarmed them. One moment the street outside had been bright with sunlight, the next moment it was dark. The night had slipped into the town while the lieutenant was dying. There seemed to be some connection between his death and the sudden advent of the night. It was as though the town had joined him in death. The stillness of the night filled their minds with apprehension. They became nervous, expectant, heavy with strange forebodings, and spoke in whispers, hoarsely, as though the darkness thickened in their throats. Their eyeballs seemed dilated with the effort of trying to penetrate the gloom and pressed achingly upon the tight lids. In the unexpected quiet the sound of plaster falling, and fragments tumbling from the shattered houses, struck upon their taut nerves and set them trembling. They lay, waiting in uncertainty for some apparition to emerge from the banked darkness. The night altered the images of the enemy that lay constantly in the depths of their minds. In some way they ceased to think of the enemy in the shapes of men, but identified them with the dark night, formless and omnipotent, floating toward them out of the unknown gloom, monsters of shadow beyond the power of human opposition.

Now the town had sunk back into the night and the heaped darkness reached to the hidden stars. The walls of the room where they lay were scarcely visible and no longer lent a feeling of security. Marlow, crossing the room, tripped over the legs of the momentarily forgotten, dead officer, and cried out in sudden terror as he fell half across the warm, soft, unresisting body. Ryan cursed him to silence and they held their breaths, waiting for the darkness to open and slay them. . . .

The machine-guns began firing!

Unsupported by the evidence of their eyes, their ears falsified the direction and volume of the sound.

"They're down that street."

"That's coming up this way."

"To the right."

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"By God, they're in the rear. In the rear, I tell you."

"Listen, they sound nearer."

"Yea, they sound nearer."

"Rot, Mandel."

"They sound nearer just the same."

"They're movin' up the street."

"This is a hell of a place to be."

"Pipe down, Marlow."

"Them guns is nearer, I tell you."

"By God, I saw a flash in that house over there."

"They're right on us."

. . . What's that? What's moving out there? . . . The darkness sways. The houses lean down to hide the creeping guns. The three-legged guns crawl up the street, thrusting their thick round snouts ahead into the night. They give tongue and the bullets crackle. The echoes shudder between the walls and the rippling noise spreads in all directions.

. . . What's that? What's crawling out there? . . . The five soldiers shrink into themselves, burrowing into the rubble for shelter from the creeping three-legged guns. They are afraid to fire their rifles for fear of attracting the attention of the guns. The night has come stealthily to life. They sense it coming alive. It is the enemy night, sheltering his advancing guns, aiding his men. They have no place in it. Last night the darkness belonged to them; to-night it is on the side of the enemy. . . . What's that? . . .

The rifles begin firing.

At first only two or three, away to the left; then others until the sound comes incessantly. The night is fully awake.

A grenade explodes.

Somewhere a voice screams in agony.

"Come on," said Perc.

"Where?"

"What for?"

"It's better here."

"Counter-attack. Out of here. Get back the way we came."

"Do you know how?"

"I'll find it!"

A passage between two houses half-way down the block, a wall and a wooden gate into a garden, trees of some kind, a narrow lane with blank sides of small houses and a hedge on the left . . . then . . . I'll know when I get there. . . . "Keep close. Go quiet. Ryan, bring up the rear. . . ." Grenades. Potato mashers. Not sharp enough for ours. What's that? What's that? . . . Fire. They've set fire to something. Here's the passage. All safe. Dad, Marlow, Mandel, Ryan. "See anything, Ryan? . . ."

"Something's on fire."

"The whole damn town's afire."

"Listen to them grenades."

"Look! Look! The flames."

"Come on. We've got to find somebody."

Running, now. Their bodies forgotten, unaware of tight lungs, pounding hearts. The gate should be here. We came through somewhere near. We've come too far. I've missed it. Some one closed the gate and I've gone by. We must . . .

The dark burst before their eyes. It exploded in incredible whiteness and the town hung pasted upon the impenetrable black, spaceless distance. Every wall, roof, stone, beam, dormer, chimney was blown loose from the known habits of matter and exposed by a clarity so intense that they could not gaze into it. There was no sound. They flung themselves against the wall and ducked their heads. The whiteness held the houses pinned upon the back-thrust dark. The night was flung out of the town. The light went on and on until they felt they could not stand it a moment longer. . . .

The flare expired.

They remained motionless, stricken blind. The fire flamed again and the arched gloom above turned red. Five yards farther, the next flare caught them. In the brilliance, Perc saw the gate just ahead and standing in its shadow an officer in trench-coat and helmet. The two stood and stared without moving. Perc cried out hoarsely as the officer lifted his hand. The stranger smiled and nodded. He was a tall, burly man with a long unshaven jaw. The dark snapped back and Perc felt the officer beside him.

"Lost?"

"Yes, sir."

"Lieutenant killed."

"Bad business. Need you all."

"Yes, sir."

Two squads with the officer. Plus five. Twenty-two. Going toward the fire. Hear it roaring and crackling. Dark street corner. Three grenades. Saw that one. Crack of red-white flame in the black. Twisting threads of fire in the dark. Light street corner. Ruddy glow reflecting, wavering like water, sliding over the stones, flowing around the lumps of shadow. Cross on a run. Good guy this officer. Knows where he's going. "What's that, Ryan?" "Who?" "Mandel?" "Ran back through the gate?" "Lousy yellow bastard!" . . . Lousy yellow, yellow; yells in the dark

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streets ahead. Terror and anger and hysteria in the sounds. Rifles firing, grenades exploding, and above the tumult, the high, strange, frenzied yelling. The sinister radiance of the burning houses lifted the blackness above the roofs and held it suspended on columns of red dusty smoke. It hung over their heads like some curious canopy, swelling and contracting as the flames increased and diminished. Beneath the crimson tent the rifles snapped like whips and the roaring grenades shook the house walls.

The running men heard the battle but the turn of the street hid it from view. Their hearts pounded in anticipation of its horror but they could not check their rush, even had they desired. They did not think of trying; they were no longer themselves: they had become shadows sucked by the hot draft into the furnace of the fight. The reasonable depths of their brains closed over and upon the shallow surface inconsequential fragments struck, glanced off, were forgotten. . . . A bayonet; glint of light on a wan, bleak face; dull iron mound of helmet; an arm waving; stones falling across fixed vision, stones dropping as though from the sky, stones never landing; black tongue of timber tasting the orange flames; hunched shoulders bucking the heated air; "Christ!" (a word afloat in the night); a sack tumbling; no, a man; "crack!" (a sound splitting darkness; in the rent, a human eye, glazed with terror). "Keep cool, keep cool!" "There they come!" Three bulks of shapeless men, low bent, running, wads of pack on their rounded shoulders, Atlases bowed under worlds of fear; three? thirty! The street filled with them. "Marlow!" (A name with meaning, separating from the laughter, screams, hoots, cracklings, blasts, roars, yells, and all the noiseless sounds of light, dark, heat, fire, sweat, hatred, blood.) Ryan's voice! "Marlow!" "Where, Ryan?" Pull of eye-muscles to focus on one thing. In a section cut from the confused movement two figures, suddenly motionless by the intensity of their struggle. Impaled on a bayonet, Marlow grasped the rifle and sought to drag its cruel knife from his torn belly. From his open mouth, an endless howl poured. Holding the rifle, the body of the German, bent like a bow, sank the steel deeper. The bayonet snapped and Marlow fell back against the wall of the house, his arms flung wide, and, braced by the agony, stood crucified against the stones. . . . Red . . . black . . . blank; three inches of steel protruding. . . . A face! Lift the iron-shod rifle butt! The face is gone. Pound it, writhing thing; grasping, kicking, gurgling faceless thing that killed Marlow. Who's that? Ryan. In the throat, Ryan. Ah-h-h-h . . .! Oh, God, sweet killing! No face, no throat, not kicking, now. "Don't kick it, Ryan!" . . . Marlow crucified on a house wall, with twelve inches of steel in him. "Drag him in here, Ryan." "Easy." "Marlow, listen, Marlow, we'll get you back. Hang tight, kid. They've cleaned 'em up, see. Stick tight, Marlow." . . .

"Is he dead, Perc?"

"He's dead."

XI

Interlude: *Night.*

They sat one on each side of Marlow's body, not glancing at him, their eyes intent upon the doorway to the street. When the flares went up they could see the dead German, sprawled on the cobbles. His head, with its slashed throat and crushed features, hung drunkenly back over his pack, his helmet fallen off. The wavering harsh light lent him a horrid semblance of life; he seemed to move, to breathe, attempting to rise in awful power. They watched him indifferently, their minds brooding upon the dead boy beside them.

"Did he have a father and mother, Ryan?"

"His old man was dead, I think."

"Any brothers and sisters?"

"Seems to me, a kid sister."

Blond, probably; with a snub nose and gray eyes. Did Marlow have gray eyes? I never noticed his eyes. . . . Perc had an impulse to glance down at the quiet face. The desire set him shuddering. He averted his head. What did it matter? Gray eyes, or blue?

"Have you any brothers and sisters, Ryan?"

"Four of one and two of the other."

"I'm the only one in our family."

"So was Burt, wasn't he?"

"I don't know."

"I seem to remember, something he said." . . .

"Jackson had no parents."

"He lived with his uncle."

"Lucky . . ."

"I guess the poor little Wop had plenty of relatives."

"Yea, they run to kids."

Streets full of kids; running, yelling, fighting; swarms of dark-faced kids, with black, sparkling eyes, and coarse black hair. . . . Rosetti dead, Jackson dead, Burt dead, Marlow dead. . . .

"Oh, well . . ."

Outside, the street was deserted of all but the dead.

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XII

The Relief: *Midnight.*

"Any C Company men down there?"

The voice drifted through the dull rectangle of the cellar entrance into the thick, smelling gloom where the soldiers were huddled. Perc answered:

"Two."

"C Company going out. Come along. Who are you?"

"Corporal Wakely and Private Ryan."

"Hello, Perc."

"Hello, sergeant."

The two soldiers emerged into the grayer darkness of the street. Ten or twelve shadowy figures leaned wearily against the wall of the house. No one spoke. The tall sergeant started up the street. Groups of soldiers moved about; stretcher bearers, ration details. In the shelter of a house lay a row of blanket-swathed forms. A faint rustle of moaning hung over the quiet shapes, like a feeble wind sighing in some forlorn desolation. The lower part of the town was still afire in spots and the restless machine-guns to the north and south played their unvarying staccato phrases.

The little column went silently, heads lowered, shoulders sagging, tired lungs breathing harshly. They left the town and began the laborious ascent of the heights beyond. At the crest they paused to rest, lying flat, exhausted, beyond caring.

The town had vanished into the morass of the night, except for the waning glow of the smouldering houses. Was the town really there? Had there ever been a town? What was its name? Can I think of a town without name? Imagine the people who built it long years ago, all the care of the masons who laid the stones, of the carpenters who sawed the joists and planed the wood and nailed the floors. Were there people who loved the streets, the roofs, the cobbles, the gardens, the walls of this nameless town? The shopkeepers take down the iron shutters, sweep the door-step, dust the counters, and display their goods. What will they do with the dead man sprawled in the doorway? Who will stumble upon the thin young body of Marlow and shriek at the protruding steel bayonet? Will they bring pails of water and wash the blood from the tiles, carefully, so the first customers, women, probably, will not faint at the thickening pools of blood, turning black in the morning air? What will they do with the shapeless thing without a face, lying in the roadway? Do you suppose they will wonder who beat that face to pulp and stand dismayed at the thought of the hidden fury that runs in the veins of men? How horrible to die, hanging on to a rifle, struggling to drag the impassive bayonet out of your body. . . . Listen, you people who once lived in that nameless town, Marlow died so you might return some day and live quietly in your houses, marrying, having children, growing old, dying. He died not knowing the name of your rotten little town, your treacherous, vile, stinking town. . . . But you won't know his name either, so that's all square. And you'll rebuild your houses, pave the streets again, plant new grass and gardens, light the fires, stock the stores, place the name of the town on the sign-posts and railway station. . . . "Ryan, what's the name of that town?"

"I don't know, Perc."

"Sergeant, what's the name of that town?"

"Belleville."

So it did have a name, after all. Well, that was all right. Only much too good a name for a lousy little beast of a town.

"Ryan."

"Yea, Perc."

"Where's Dad Hendrickson do you suppose?"

"He's O. K. I guess."

"I didn't see him after things got bad."

"Neither did I."

"Do you think . . .?"

"Let's go! Let's go!"

The weary men trudged the same road. At a junction, under the lee of a steep bank they met the rest of the company, occupying fox holes hastily dug in the loose soil. They exchanged brief greetings and set to work, digging shelters. Presently Perc heard some one asking for him.

"Here," he called, "up here."

"Corporal, corporal, I thought you were killed."

"Hello, dad. Glad you weren't hit."

"No. I wasn't. It was terrible. Who's with you?"

"Ryan."

"Where are . . .?"

"Marlow's . . . back there!"

"Mandel?"

"That . . . Oh, I don't know."

The sergeant came stumbling in the dark.

"Squad report, Perc."

"Marlow was killed. Mandel . . . missing."

"Bad day for your squad, Perc."

"Aren't you going to report Mandel?" asked Ryan.

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"What's the use? They'll find out. Maybe he . . ."

"He's a yellow . . ."

"Oh, well . . ."

The three lay close together. There were no stars in the sky and the rising wind passed with a soft 'hush' 'hush' in the darkness. Rain began falling. They crawled under the lip of the bank, curling their bodies for protection from the increasing rain. The thin sounds of the wind and the rain blended into one continuous murmuring.

XIII

Burying Detail: *Dawn.*

In the sodden depths of sleep, Perc heard his name spoken. He awoke reluctantly, and opened his eyes to the dark and the falling rain, and the tall figure of the sergeant bending toward him.

"Bring your squad and come with me."

He woke Ryan and Dad Hendrickson. They urged their stiff bodies to movement and followed the sergeant down the road and across the field to a stone house, solitary, behind a scattering of trees. The sergeant pointed to the blanket-swathed form of a dead man.

"They want him buried. There's a shovel around somewhere."

"Here it is," said Ryan.

The dusty shovel entered the rocky earth complainingly. The earth tore loose with a clatter of stones and rending of roots. The rain descended and chittered on the tiles of the roof; the wind coughed and sighed; the shovel scraped harshly in the rubble. . . . How deep must I dig this damned hole? How much earth does he think he needs to keep him warm? Why can't they let me sleep? He'll be here to-morrow, and the day after and the day after that. We've got to hide him quick so the living, awaking to-morrow, won't be dismayed, finding his dead eyes staring at them. Who is he? Who was he? Is it Burt I'm burying here? Is it Jackson? Is it Marlow? Is it Rosetti? What does it matter? We bury them, and some one will bury us. Ashes to dust, or no, dust to . . . God, I'm tired. . . . "Catch hold, Ryan."

"Slide him in."

"Somebody's hero," said Ryan.

"Shut up," cried Dad Hendrickson. "Don't mock at the dead."

He let go of the blanket and turned abruptly, covered his face with his hands and began to sob. Ryan shuffled his feet, embarrassed, ashamed, pitying the gaunt, bowed, weeping soldier.

"Now, now, dad . . ."

The earth was shovelled thinly over the dead man. The rain came endlessly washing out of the dark. They felt queer, drained, light-headed with weariness. In the east the curtain of rain, ravelled at the edges, disclosed a gray dreary light scumming the hill tops.

Sleep, thought Perc. I want to sleep.

He lay down on the sodden cold ground and pulled the edge of his pack under his head for a pillow. Waves of drowsiness flowed over him. They washed him clean of anger, of despair and hatred. He felt his body slipping away, carried out on the dark tides of sleep, losing importance. His arms no longer remembered swinging his rifle to crush the heavy stock upon the man who had killed Marlow. A sense of unutterable comfort wrapped about him. The earth and the black sky rested gently, one upon the other, and between them was the little invisible shape in the air, where he lay. Sleep, dark, night. . . . He recalled momentarily the rigid accusing figure of Dad Hendrickson confronting Ryan like a mad prophet in strange attire of olive drab and iron helmet. Thou shalt not kill. Words! War, blood, death; more words. Sleep. Oh, lovely word. The deep billows of sleep rocked him into nothingness. Along the road the company lay, sleeping. The rain fell with a pleasant rushing sound. Far back, on other roads, moved the war; camions shoved the war forward; horses dragged the war into the rain-dark; men labored, advancing the war: the war was advancing toward him through the murk and mud. Let it come! Now he must sleep. Let me sleep. To-morrow I shall be part of the war again. . . . Now. . . . With his last conscious effort he reached out and pulled his rifle close beside him, where it would be protected from the rain, ready at hand. . . .

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